

# Rep. Spiros: Bill to increase smoking age passes assembly

Posted on Friday, Feb 21, 2020

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**Madison** - Today Representative John Spiros (R-Marshfield) released the following statement in response to the Wisconsin State Assembly voting to pass Assembly Bill 422:

“Between 2017 and 2018, the use of vapor products increased 78% among high school students, and by 48% among middle school students. Nearly half of 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported using vapor products. After decades of smoking going down, suddenly the numbers have been spiking again. It is what can only be described as a public health crisis.

“These numbers are concerning to me – I am alarmed about the trend of increased smoking among youth. In 2019 I introduced Assembly Bill 422, which increases the age to purchase tobacco from 18 to 21, in response to this crisis.

“Then, in December 2019, Congress passed and President Trump signed a law to increase the age to purchase tobacco products from 18 to 21. This made it all the more pressing that we pass Assembly Bill 422, since the federal law requires states to implement this law change or risk losing vital substance abuse and prevention grant funding to the tune of millions of dollars.

“Assembly Bill 422 would increase the age to purchase cigarettes, tobacco, nicotine, and vapor products from 18 to 21. The bill would penalize both licensed and non-licensed retailers who sell these products to individuals under the age of 21.

“By passing this bill, not only are we ensuring that Wisconsin does not lose federal grant money, but we are also helping to stop a public health crisis in its tracks.”

The bill passed on the Assembly floor on a bipartisan vote, and now goes to the Senate for a vote before heading to the Governor's desk.