

Dear

I'm a constituent and a .

I am writing to urge you to support legislation that raises the legal minimum age for the sale of all tobacco and nicotine products to 21.

Tobacco use remains a leading cause of preventable death in our state and across the country. Exposure to tobacco products greatly increases rates of cardiovascular disease, resulting in a public health crisis among your constituents and creating a significant strain on our state's health care delivery system.

Nearly 95 percent of adults who smoke started before the age of 21, and nearly 100 percent started smoking by age 26. During the ages of 18 – 21, the brain is still developing in areas responsible for decision making, impulse control, sensation seeking and susceptibility to peer pressure. Adolescents and young adults are therefore a critical population to target with evidenced-based tobacco control strategies. Raising the legal age for nicotine/tobacco sales also protects younger teens, as 90 percent of those who provide cigarettes to adolescents under 18 are themselves under 21.

As of June 11, 2018, five states—California, New Jersey, Oregon, Hawaii and Maine—have raised the legal age for tobacco sales to 21, along with at least 320 localities, including New York City, Chicago, San Antonio, Boston, Cleveland, Minneapolis and both Kansas Cities.

As a constituent, a cardiovascular care provider and a member of the American College of Cardiology, I believe raising the legal purchasing age to 21 would be a significant step towards reducing the burden of tobacco and preventing nicotine addiction among children in our state. I would be honored to speak with you personally about strategies to better protect our children from the negative effects of tobacco use.

Sincerely,