

From: "Stephen Helfer" <shelfer@gmail.com>
Sent: Sat, 9 Nov 2024 20:35:10 +0000 (UTC)
Subject: GENERATIONAL TOBACCO BAN (NICOTINE FREE GENERATION)
To: <lpearson@belchertown.org>

Vice Chairwoman Pearson:

A Generational Tobacco Ban (Nicotine Free Generation) does not affect youth. It affects persons 21 years old and older only. Stores already face fines for selling tobacco or nicotine products to persons under 21. A generational Tobacco Ban in a few years would mean that a 30-year-old Combat veteran could not legally buy cigarettes, while a 21-year-old could vote, join the military, and buy alcohol or marijuana. This is tobacco control out of control.

It would create two classes of citizen. Some 30-year-olds would be able to buy tobacco products and other 30-year-olds could not, based not on their age, but their birth date. This is arbitrary and capricious. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court has upheld this policy, but it poses serious constitutional questions.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, teen cigarette smoking is at an all-time low and teen vaping is at a ten-year low. The CDC reports also that fewer than 2% of teens use nicotine pouches. Gallup reports adult smoking at a 80-year-low. Also, according to the CDC, two of every three adults who have ever smoked have quit. It may be difficult to quit, but millions have done so.

With tobacco and vaping rates so low for both adults and teens, and teen use of nicotine pouches less than 2%, there is no reason to impose further onerous restrictions on retailers. Many of them are immigrants of color who work long hours and depend on small profit margins. Further restrictions would hurt them. They are part of the community, not adversaries, and they deserve to be treated as such.

A generational Tobacco ban unjustifiably curtails adult liberty, is unfair to Belchertown's merchants, and serves no vital public health need. Please do not impose it.

Stephen Helfer
Cambridge Citizens for Smokers' Rights

N.B. We receive no funding from any source whatsoever.

Sources:

In an annual survey conducted in schools across the nation, fewer than 8 percent of high school students reported using e-cigarettes in the past month, the lowest level in a decade. Some compared the news to the decline in smoking traditional cigarettes, which at about 1.6 percent of teenagers, has reached a notable low.

New York Times, 9/6/24

E-cigarettes were the most commonly reported currently used tobacco product (5.9%) among all students, followed by nicotine pouches (1.8%), cigarettes (1.4%),
CDC MMWR Report (Oct. 17)
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/wr/mm7341a2.htm>

Cigarette smoking in the U.S. is at a low point, according to eight decades of Gallup trends.

Gallup
<https://news.gallup.com/poll/648521/cigarette-smoking-rate-ties-year-low.aspx>

Nearly 2 in 3 adults who have ever smoked cigarettes have quit.

CDC, "Smoking Cessation: Fast Facts"
<https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/php/data-statistics/smoking-cessation/index.html>