

Crete, Andrea

From: Emily Wieja <ewieja@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 5, 2024 6:38 PM
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swilliams@belchertown.org
Subject: Oppose the Generational Tobacco Ban

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To the Belchertown Board of Health, Select Board, and Town Manager,

My name is Emily Wieja and I live in Cambridge, MA. I feel I have to write to you in opposition to the Generational Tobacco Ban (Nicotine Free Generation Proposal.) I know this policy proposal has been coordinated by paid tobacco control activists and will continue to be raised in different communities and towns in Massachusetts. If I do not oppose the proposal now, it will be proposed in Cambridge next.

I oppose this policy because it proposes to restrict the freedom of adults to choose for themselves. Massachusetts has already raised the legal age to purchase tobacco products to 21, the same age to buy alcohol. There is no need to increase the legal age further.

Do we, in Massachusetts, believe that it is the place of public health to place bans on things like alcohol, marijuana, and gambling? These are all choices that we've seen fit to allow adult consumers to make for themselves. If we place a ban on the ability to purchase tobacco and other nicotine-containing products, we are saying it is ok to dictate adult lifestyle choices, and there will be no end to it.

I also want to mention the negative consequences that will result. Adult and teen smoking rates are at an all-time low, but this will lead to a needless increase in black market crime, increased cost of enforcement and policing, inequitable enforcement, and loss of convenience store revenue away from towns that have passed this proposal to other towns and states.

Are we going to control what adults do to this extent? I ask you not to consider this policy. It might be helpful for you to also consider that 2 weeks ago, the Peabody MA Board of Health voted against this proposal and decided not to enact it.

Best wishes,