

**University of Colorado Student Government**

**Legislative Council**

**March 13, 2014 80 LCR 05 — Supporting HB 1263 on Tobacco Use**

**Sponsored by:
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**A Resolution in Support of HB 1263: Concerning the Prohibition of Tobacco Transactions for Persons Under Twenty-One Years of Age**

**Resolution History**

Tobacco and related tobacco products represent the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, claiming 480,000 American lives every year. Tobacco-related deaths account for more American fatalities annually than alcohol, AIDS, homicide, suicide, illegal drug use, highway accidents, and fires *combined.* Disturbingly, a report by the Office of the Surgeon General stated that 600,000 middle school students, and more than 3 million high school students smoked regularly in 2012.

Efforts to reduce tobacco use have been shown to be most effective when targeted at the 18-25 year old age group. According to the Office of the Surgeon General, nearly 9 out of 10 adult smokers started smoking before age 18, and 99% of smokers had started before age 261. Most importantly, 90% of those under the age of 18 obtain tobacco from friends or relatives who are between the ages of 18 and 202. Clearly then, intervention must be conducted to target teen smokers, significantly those between the ages of 18 and 20.

The effects of smoking are far more wide-reaching than comes to mind. Primary victims include not only the smokers themselves, but also those exposed to secondhand smoke, and society at large through exponentially increased healthcare costs and lost productivity due to tobacco-induced disease and disability. According to the American Lung Association, direct healthcare costs and so-called “indirect” costs associated with decreased productivity from an ailing and diseased workforce added up to over $193 billion in 2004.

This enormous cost must be considered when arguing that the decrease in tax revenue from cigarette sales will negatively impact state and federal agencies, an argument commonly used against the raising of the legal purchase age for tobacco. As explained in the Annals of Internal Medicine, this argument is short-sighted, as the costs from decreased tax revenue would be far outweighed by the savings in both healthcare costs and retained productivity through the maintenance of an undiseased workforce.

In addition to the obvious public health dangers, one omnipresent issue surrounding tobacco use is the creation of a steady stream of waste in the form of cigarette butts. Facilities Management collects an average of 8,000 cigarette butts from around the Boulder campus on a weekly basis. This equates to an entire .5FTE worth of effort expended in order to simply remove the trash generated by way of tobacco use. Policies like the recently enacted campus-wide smoking ban, although capable of addressing issues like this, are simply insufficient when the sheer scope of the tobacco-use issue is appreciated.

Finally, a staggering 73% of CU students who regularly use tobacco, reported wanting to quit using tobacco entirely. This number reflects the degree to which early-start smoking habits negatively impact society at large, and our CU student body specifically, who end up trapped in addiction at a young age, realizing only later the health crisis that they have walked into.

**Resolution Summary**

HB 1263 is a bipartisan bill introduced in the Colorado State Assembly on February 4, 2014. This bill would prohibit the sale of tobacco and tobacco related products to persons under the age of twenty-one.

University of Colorado Student Government would like to express our support for legislation that would raise the legal age of purchase for products containing tobacco to 21 years old.

Should this resolution pass, its authors and sponsors pledge to publicize its benefits and support to the CU Board of Regents, our elected officials, and the public at large in their decision to support raising the age of tobacco purchase to 21.

As students, we have a responsibility to fight for what will benefit our students. Postponing the age at which our students will be able to acquire tobacco and tobacco related products will create a healthier CU student population and will result in economic benefits for all.

**Whereas,** tobacco and tobacco related products are the leading cause of preventable death in the United States

**Whereas,** the costs from decreased tax revenue would be far outweighed by the savings in both healthcare costs and retained productivity through the maintenance of an undiseased workforce

**Whereas,** 9 out of 10 adult smokers started smoking before the age of 18 and the primary sources of tobacco for those under the age of 18 are persons between the ages of 18 and 20

**Whereas,** 73% of CU students reported wanting to quit using tobacco entirely

**Whereas,** CU has already committed to creating a smoke free campus

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the University of Colorado Student Government that:

**Section 1:** CUSG supports the passage of HB 1263 Concerning the Prohibition of Tobacco Transactions for Persons Under Twenty-One Years of Age.

**Section 2:** It is the view of Legislative Council that raising the age of tobacco and tobacco related purchase to 21 will create healthier Coloradans and will have a positive impact on the Colorado economy.

**Section 3:** Upon passage, this resolution will be distributed to the student body, Inter-Campus Student Forum, Board of Regents, CU Boulder administration, Colorado State University, Joint Budget Committee of the State of Colorado, and media

**Section 4:** This resolution shall take effect upon passage by the legislative council and upon either obtaining the signature of two Tri-Executives or the lapse of six days without action by the Tri-Executives.

**Vote Count**

**03/13/2014 Passed on 1st reading 10-2-2**

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 President of Student Affairs Legislative Council President

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Ellie Roberts Marco Dorado

President of Internal Affairs President of External Affairs

1. United States. Office of the Surgeon General. *Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults*. Web. 02 Mar. 2014.

2. Steinberg, Michael B., MD., MPH, and Christine D. Delnevo, PhD, MPH. "Increasing the ‘Smoking Age:’ the Right Thing to Do." *Annals of Internal Medicine.* Online (2013). Web. 3 Mar. 2014.

3. American Lung Association. *Smoking Health Effects Fact Sheet*.: American Lung Association. Web.