

13-1101

AUG 21 2013

PUBLIC SAFETY

## MOTION

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, causing more than 480,000 deaths every year in addition to many health problems such as heart disease, emphysema and lung cancer. If numbers follow the current trend, smoking will cause over eight million deaths by 2030 annually. Total deaths caused by tobacco usage are more than the total number of deaths from AIDS, illegal drugs, alcohol use, motor vehicle injuries, suicides and murders combined. In addition, the American Cancer Society reported that between 2000 and 2004, smoking caused more than \$193 billion in health-related costs each year in the U.S. due to medical costs and the cost of lost productivity.

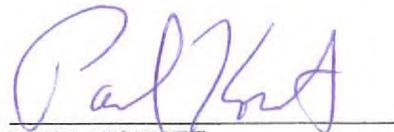
According to the American Lung Association, around 90 percent of life-long smokers begin smoking before the age of 21, with around 80-90 percent starting by age 18 according to the Surgeon General. The transition from experimenting to becoming a regular smoker usually occurs around age 20. The earlier one starts smoking, the more susceptible one is to developing a chronic addiction to nicotine. According to a study published in The Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, "a young cigarette smoker can begin to feel powerful desires for nicotine within two days of first inhaling...and about half of children who become addicted report symptoms of dependence by the time they are smoking only seven cigarettes a month". The authors also stated "a single dose of nicotine has effects on the brain that can last as long as a month, and the nicotine obtained from just one or two puffs on a cigarette will occupy half of the brain's nicotinic receptors, the molecules specifically sought by nicotine in tobacco addiction." In addition, a third of all youth who become regular smokers before adulthood will end up dying from smoking related illnesses.

The social sources of cigarettes for young smokers are often individuals who are just over the legal age of 18, with a majority of those purchasing cigarettes for minors being between 18 to 20 years old. Access to cigarettes would be limited by raising the legal purchasing age of tobacco to 21, as high school students are less likely to come into contact with 21-year-olds compared to 18-year-olds in their social circles. This reduces the opportunity to access tobacco from legal buyers. By raising the smoking age to 21, many of those between the ages of 18 to 21 will be prevented from taking up the deadly habit.

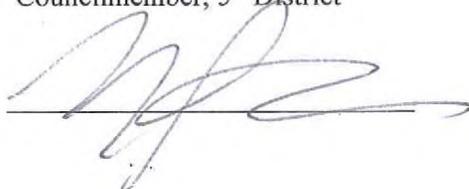
No state or large city currently has a "Tobacco to 21" law. However, several towns in Massachusetts, including the town of Needham, have passed such a law. Following an increase in sales age from 18 to 21 in 2005, the number of Needham high school students who reported smoking declined from 13% to 5.5% in the years between 2006 - 2012. It is important for Los Angeles to enact such a law, to reduce the number of young people who take up the habit of smoking, and the massive societal costs associated with addiction to tobacco.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Attorney, with the assistance of the Chief Legislative Analyst, be requested to prepare and present an ordinance to raise the legal age one can purchase tobacco cigarettes from 18 to 21.

PRESENTED BY:

  
 PAUL KORETZ  
 Councilmember, 5<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY:



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ORIGINAL