



# 21 Reasons to Raise the Tobacco Sale Age to 21 in Texas

- 1.** Tobacco is the No. 1 cause of preventable death in the United States.
- 2.** The Institute of Medicine (now the National Academy of Medicine) has concluded that raising the tobacco sale age to 21 will have a meaningful positive impact on public health and save lives.
- 3.** About 95 percent of all adult smokers start before the age of 21.
- 4.** From age 18 to 21, many smokers transition from experimentation to regular use of cigarettes
- 5.** Delaying the age when young people first begin using tobacco will help reduce the risk that they become addicted smokers.
- 6.** More than 480,000 Americans die each year from tobacco use, including 28,000 in Texas.
- 7.** Tobacco use costs the U.S. about \$170 billion in health care spending each year, including \$8.8 billion in Texas. Medicaid costs caused by smoking in Texas surpass \$1.9 billion.
- 8.** Nearly 70 percent of Texas voters support raising the legal sale age for tobacco products to age 21. (66 percent of GOP voters favor it; 74 percent of Democratic voters favor it.)
- 9.** There is bipartisan support in both the Texas House and Senate for bills that would increase the tobacco sale age to 21.
- 10.** In Texas, 10.6 percent of high school students still smoke – that’s 164,500 kids.

- 11.** More than 81,000 Texas kids try smoking for the first time each year. 13,700 young Texans become regular smokers every year. And nearly half a million (498,000) Texas kids alive now will ultimately die prematurely from smoking if current trends continue.
- 12.** Military leaders recognize the toll tobacco takes on troop readiness and on the military health care system and are actively taking steps to reduce tobacco use in the military. The minimum age of military service does not equal readiness to enlist in a lifetime of nicotine addiction.
- 13.** Because adolescence and young adulthood are critical periods of growth and development, young people are more sensitive to nicotine's addictiveness and can become addicted more quickly than adults.
- 14.** Individuals who start smoking at younger ages are more likely to smoke as adults and are among the heaviest users.
- 15.** The health consequences of smoking begin immediately and accumulate over a lifetime.
- 16.** Tobacco companies target kids and young adults – they know that's when most users become addicted to tobacco.
- 17.** Tobacco companies spend \$9.1 billion per year to promote their deadly products, including over \$600 million in Texas. Much of that marketing directly influences kids and young adults.
- 18.** According to the Surgeon General (2012), tobacco company marketing causes the onset and continuation of smoking among kids and young adults.
- 19.** Tobacco companies market smokeless tobacco, little cigars and electronic cigarettes in kid-friendly flavors like cotton candy, gummy bear, cherry and watermelon.
- 20.** Friends and classmates are a common source of tobacco products for youth users. Raising the legal sale age for tobacco would help keep tobacco out of schools.
- 21.** Tobacco companies admit that increasing the legal sale age for tobacco threatens their profits — a Philip Morris document stated, "Raising the legal minimum age for cigarette purchase to 21 could gut our key young adult market (17-20)..."

*Source: Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, TobaccoFreeKids.org*