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CONTACT: Kirsten Voinis, 512-922-7141
or kvoinis@kvoinis.com

**HOUSE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE PASSES BILL TO STOP
TOBACCO SALES TO TEXANS UNDER AGE 21**

Texas 21 Coalition supports HB 749 by Rep. John Zerwas

The Texas 21 Coalition on Monday thanked the Texas House Public Health Committee for unanimously (10-0) passing legislation to stop the sale of tobacco to Texans younger than 21. House Bill 749 by state Rep. John Zerwas, M.D., (R-Richmond) has bipartisan support in the Texas House with five co-authors, including Public Health Committee Chair Senfronia Thompson (D-Houston), and seven co-sponsors.

In the Senate, tobacco age legislation is Senate Bill 21 by state Sen. Joan Huffman (R-Houston).

Eight states have raised the minimum tobacco sale age to 21, along with at least 430 localities, including San Antonio in Texas.

About 95 percent of smokers start before age 21. In Texas, 7.4 percent of high school students smoke and over 10 percent use e-cigarettes, while 10,400 kids become daily smokers every year. Nearly half a million (498,000) Texas children alive now will ultimately die prematurely from smoking if current trends continue.

The following statement can be attributed to Shelby Massey, government relations director- Texas, American Heart Association (a Texas 21 member):

“Today’s House committee passage is an important step toward keeping our state’s youth away from tobacco and from starting down the road to addiction. Texas 21 urges the Texas Legislature to pass HB 749 to protect the lives and health of Texas children and to save state money now spent on tobacco-related diseases.”

For more information on the tobacco 21 issue – including numerous fact sheets – visit www.texas21.org.

The Texas 21 Coalition includes [88 health organizations](#), including the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), American Heart Association, American Lung Association, Texas Academy of Family Physicians, Texas Medical Association, Texas Pediatric Society and Texas Public Health Coalition. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center is present as an educational resource only. More information can be found at www.texas21.org. Follow the Coalition on Facebook at [/texastobacco21](#) and Twitter at [@TexasTobacco21](#).

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