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TEXAS 21 COALITION APPLAUDS SENATE COMMITTEE PASSAGE OF TOBACCO 21
SB 21 by Sen. Joan Huffman raises minimum legal tobacco sale age to 21

The Texas 21 Coalition, representing 88 public health organizations, on Monday applauded the Senate State Affairs Committee for voting to increase the minimum legal sale age of tobacco – including e-cigarettes – from 18 to 21.

Senate Bill 21 by State Affairs Committee Chair Sen. Joan Huffman (R-Houston) has widespread bipartisan support in the 31-member Texas Senate with eight other authors and three co-authors. In addition, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick has made raising the tobacco age [one of his legislative priorities](#).

In the House, tobacco age legislation House Bill 749 by state Rep. John Zerwas, M.D., (R-Richmond) was passed unanimously by House Public Health Committee on March 25.

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 Charlie Gagen, director, grassroots – Texas, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network:

“Passage of Senate Bill 21 by the Texas Legislature would be a major step to keep tobacco out of our schools and help young Texans avoid a life time of addiction. A recent national study found that a surge in e-cigarette use by teens has erased past progress in reducing youth tobacco use. It’s frightening that the lives and health of youth are more endangered now by tobacco than at any time in the recent past.”

Ten states have voted to raise their tobacco sale ages to 21, along with [at least 440 cities and counties](#) across the country, including San Antonio, Leon Valley and Kirby in Texas.

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](#).