

Before the Ohio Senate Finance Committee
Opponent Testimony of Anna Coffman
Am. Sub HB 166
May 28, 2019

Hello Mr. Chairman, my name is Anna Coffman, I am 31 years old. I am the owner and operator of Vapor Town in Hillsboro Ohio, and also the Co-Owner of Atmosphere E-liquid. I am here today to urge you to remove the Tobacco 21 language from the budget.

When I was 16 years old, I started smoking Combustible Tobacco because of a friend who at the time was 23 years old. Once I started this habit, I couldn't stop. I attempted to quit multiple times with the gum and patches, but I had no success. I smoked until I was 20 years old. That was when I found Vapor Products. My husband and I both started using vapor the same day, and we since that day we have not smoked a single Cigarette. Once we switched to vapor as a safer alternative to combustible tobacco, I notice my health had been restored. I was no longer sick all that time.

We are now 11 years smoke free thanks to vapor. Thankfully, these products were available to us when I was at the young age of 20. We were able to step down off of combustible tobacco safely and quickly.

If the legal age to buy vapor products would have be 21 when I was 20 years old, I believe I would still be smoking today.

Raising the age to 21 will do more harm than good. Vapor products are proven to be 95% safer than combustible tobacco, and twice as effective as the patches and gum. We need these products to stay available for the people who need the help to stop smoking. 18-20-year-old adults are adults, not children. They have the right to vote, enlist in our military, work in healthcare, work as a fireman, become a police officer etc. Tobacco 21 is stripping them of their right to choose.

We all agree that we do not want children using vapor but penalizing the 18-20-year-old adults isn't right. We as vape shop owners do an amazing job with IDing and keeping vapor out of the hands of minors. We also employ young adults 18-20, if T21 passes there will be thousands of jobs lost.

I believe we can come up with a better solution, but T21 is not that solution. For the sake of the young adults 18-20, the people who need our help to stop using combustible tobacco because of a mistake they made, just like I did at a young age, I urge you to remove the Tobacco 21 language off of the budget.

Thank you, I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.