

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

Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing me to appear before you today to express my concerns with raising the legal age of buying vapor products. My name is Michael Withers and I am a vapor user and work in a vape shop.

I started smoking right around the age of 14 or 15. I was like most of my friends who were smokers then, I would get one more drag of my cigarette before walking into school in hopes that it helped me get through the day. As the years went by, playing sports, going fishing and even just hanging out with my friends became more and more difficult. More difficult all because of smoking and the effects it was having on me.

I woke up one morning about two weeks after my 18th birthday and my brother in law texted me saying that there was a vape shop really close to home and did I want to check it out. After trying vapor, and understanding that it could help me stop smoking, I started frequenting my local vape shop more and more.

At that vape shop I got to know the people who worked there and really became part of a community. So much so that in time I started working at the store. Now I'm the one helping smokers make the switch to a product that we know can help them stop smoking but also that we know is a safer alternative.

Vaping has changed my life in so many ways, from my health to my job. I think of all those teenagers who make the mistake of starting to smoke and how if they won't have the ability to use vapor to help them quit cigarettes until they are 21 will miss out on three years of better health.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, I'm happy to answer any questions.