

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

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for allowing me to testify, this is my first time testifying here at the statehouse. My name is Justin Thompson and I am from Lancaster and I am both an employee of a vapor shop but also a user of the product.

When I was at the age of 15, I started to use dipping tobacco and was soon addicted to the harmful product. Around March of 2018, soon after I turned 18, I purchased my first vapor product. I didn't do it to be different or stand out from the crowd. I bought it to help me with quitting dipping tobacco and have healthy gums.

As a 19-year-old working in a vape shop and a year user of vape products, do I lose my job and lose my right to vape if this language were to pass? These are question I ask myself multiple times a day when thinking about the Tobacco 21 portion of this bill. The bill not only affects people like me, it affects people who are just now transferring to vapor products to help quit the use of harmful tobacco products. There is research, like the New England Journal of Medicine, out there that states that vaping is twice as affective as a nicotine replacement then any patch's and gum. But we want to take away this effective way to quit tobacco products?

I'm a firm believer that it all starts with the parents. If we create a tougher law that has a stricter punishment for parents, or anybody caught buying tobacco products for underage minors it would help more than enough to have them stop and think twice about buying. Instead of going the route of prohibition, sit down with people in the vape industry, which are more than happy to have, and talk about on how we can stop underage minors from getting their hand on tobacco products.

At the age of 18 you can join the armed forces and go to war. You could die for your country but if the Tobacco 21 language in the budget bill goes through you can no longer use any form of tobacco products including vaping. What should we tell our 18-20-year old's in the military right now when they come home and be told that they no longer have the right to indulge in the use of tobacco products? How do you think they will feel when told that? They will probably feel betrayed by the very government and country that they are fighting for. Not one question has been asked to vape shop owners, workers or anybody who was been in the vape industry or even tobacco industry about how we could come together to try and stop this underage use of tobacco products and vape products. Prohibition does not work. It didn't not work when the government prohibited the use of alcohol and it would not work now with tobacco products.

If anything, those that will be affected by this change should be able to have their say in it. Rather than the General Assembly voting on this, it should go to the ballot and the people of Ohio should make the decision.

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