

HCS HB 1484 -- TOBACCO PRODUCTS

SPONSOR: Christ

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on General Laws by a vote of 11 to 5.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 1484.

This bill specifies that no political subdivision deny a qualified applicant for a tobacco products license, an alternative nicotine products license, or a vapor products license if the new license is for the same business or location that had a tobacco products license, an alternative nicotine products license, or a vapor products license within the previous 24 months, as described in the bill.

Additionally, any new licensee remains eligible for a tobacco products license, an alternative nicotine products license, or a vapor products license, or the renewal thereof, provided that such licensee complies with applicable rules and laws.

The bill changes the minimum age to purchase tobacco products, alternative nicotine products, and vapor products from 18 years of age to 21 years of age.

The Division of Alcohol and Tobacco within the Department of Public Safety is currently allowed to employ a person 17 years of age, with parental consent, to attempt to purchase tobacco for the purpose of inspection or enforcement of tobacco laws. This bill changes the age to 16 years of age and under 21 years of age.

This bill is similar to SB 522 (2023).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that this legislation ensures that the State adheres to the Federal mandate that made the legal age to purchase tobacco 21 years of age and over. This legislation addresses the fear that 18 year olds can purchase tobacco and then distribute to minors within the high school system. By increasing the age to buy tobacco to 21, teenagers no longer have the ease of access to tobacco that they currently have. Supporters addressed the concern that this legislation could potentially affect the sale of tobacco within a certain distance of schools. Proponents assured the committee that stores selling near schools would not be

negatively affected by this legislation. Supporters stated that these stores will be allowed to continue making revenue from tobacco related sales. Several proponents expressed their concern with local ordinances that have been passed banning tobacco sales within a certain distance of a school. Supporters stated that such ordinances greatly reduce the value of tobacco selling stores due to the prohibition of one of their best selling products. Proponents support this legislation because it ensures that these types of sales can continue without government interference.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Christ; City of Eureka; MPCA-Missouri Petroleum & Convenience Association; and the Warrenton Oil Company.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the ordinances that ban sales of tobacco within a certain distance of schools are necessary to ensure the health of students. Students testified that too many of their friends can easily access tobacco and have experienced negative consequences due to tobacco use. These ordinances have been shown to curb teen use of tobacco. Removing the bans would cause a great deal of health concerns in teenagers due to increased tobacco use. These stores often use tobacco ads that are targeted at children. The hope behind these types of ordinances is to reduce youth-targeted tobacco ad campaigns. This legislation would allow for the continuance of this kind of ad campaign which would allow for increased tobacco sales to youth. Several health organizations testified against this legislation and in favor of the ordinances that have been passed banning tobacco sales within a certain distance of schools. These ordinances have been shown to help reduce smoking related illnesses such as lung cancer. Finally, opponents discussed the legislation's potential to take away local control and zoning regulations through overreaching State imposed legislation.

Testifying in person against the bill were Missouri Nurses Association; American Heart Association; Missouri Association of Local Public Health Agencies - MOALPHA; Missouri Academy of Family Physicians; Missouri Center for Public Health Excellence; Muhammadali Alrubaye; Missouri State Medical Association; American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network; American Lung Association; Michal Peters; Greater KC Chamber of Commerce & City of Kansas City; Stan Cowan; Arnie Dienoff; and Katie Towns, Springfield-Greene County Health Department - City Of Springfield.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that local government should be able to enforce ordinances restricting sales of tobacco within a certain distance of schools without the fear of State interference.

Testifying in person on the bill was the Missouri Municipal League.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.