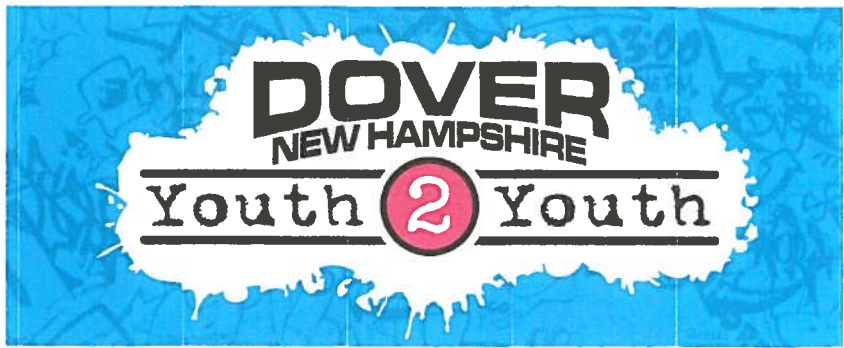


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Testimony

My name is Hannah Martuscello and I am a Senior at Dover High School, my name is Olivia Malone and I'm a Sophomore at Dover High School, and I'm Elsa Rogers a Freshman at Dover High School and we are here in support of this city ordinance to raise the age of purchase, use, and possession of all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, to 21 years old.

We are all members of the Dover Youth to Youth high school team which meets on Monday nights. Youth to Youth is a large youth empowerment program with 70 members in grades 6-12 who work after school with drug and alcohol prevention.

We are concerned about the current age restriction on tobacco products. The current age to purchase tobacco is 18. By proposing this change to 21, it will increase the health and safety of youth in Dover.

We feel that the age restriction should be raised because youth who have access to these products are more likely to suffer from the life threatening and fatal consequences of tobacco and nicotine. With the current age of sale being 18, it means many seniors in high school, who have reached that age, are old enough to legally purchase tobacco and then bring the tobacco products into the schools; or otherwise provide them to younger students.

Some people may say that we should let 18-year-olds decide for themselves whether or not they should use tobacco products. But some commercial products, such as alcohol, require the customer to be 21 to purchase them because they can potentially be dangerous, harmful, or create harmful situations. Tobacco and nicotine products, such as e-cigs, fall into this category as well because we have seen how addictive they can be and we know about all of the dangerous consequences of using these products, such as lung cancer, breathing issues, and, most commonly, addiction. This further proves why it would be logical to put it on the same playing field as alcohol in terms of harmful qualities and impact on public health.

In New Hampshire alone, the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids has projected that 22,000 kids under the age of 18 right now, will die an early death due to smoking. Most smokers start when they are young. The older someone gets without smoking, the less likely they are to ever smoke. About 95% of adults who smoke started smoking before the age of 21, and studies show that 75% of youth who smoke will still smoke as adults. By increasing the age to 21, it will prevent thousands from kids from ever smoking. We

are now passing out a letter from Nancy Vaughan, the director of government relations at the American Heart and Stroke Association, in support of our testimony, which provides sources and research supporting the points we are making this evening.

Most teens who are between 15 and 17 years old, get their tobacco and nicotine products from someone under the age of 21. By raising the age to 21, a young teen would have to know or find someone at least that age to buy nicotine products for them, which increases the difficulty of getting them. We feel that, as a result, teens are less likely to have access to these products. This will help to keep tobacco products out of schools and out of the hands of young teens.

This particularly pertains to the e-cigarette issue at the middle and high school. Many of the teachers, staff, and students have been raising complaints about the disruption caused by people using these vape products during school. Even in the high school, just going to the bathroom proves to be an issue, because other students are in there vaping. We have also brought with us a letter in support of this ordinance from Dean Stephens, a Dean of Instruction at Dover High, where she voices concerns over the use of these products by students in school.

Tobacco use in New Hampshire among teens has been on the decline for the past 20 years, and it is important that we do all that we can to keep that positive trend going. In 2001, 25% of high schoolers smoked cigarettes in New Hampshire. As of 2015, the smoking rate of regular cigarettes among high schoolers has dropped to 9%. That is an amazing decrease to see in just over 14 years.

However, we are seeing a dramatic increase in e-cigarette use. Statewide in 2015, 25% of high schoolers reported using e-cigarettes and that number is sure to be increasing. The Institute of Medicine predicts that with a tobacco 21 ordinance, tobacco use rates will decrease by 12%. With this ordinance, we predict to still keep a steady decline in smoking rates among teens and expect to see e-cigarette usage drop as well.

We are also passing out a folder with a copy of our testimony as well as student testimonies as to why they support tobacco 21 and their personal stories regarding the issue.

We urge you to vote in favor of this tobacco 21 ordinance and help Dover lead New Hampshire in the push for a healthy, smoke-free future, as well as joining countless cities in Massachusetts, as well as states such as Maine and Oregon, in raising the age of purchase, use, and possession of tobacco and nicotine related products to 21.

We would be glad to take any questions at this time.