

My name is Josh Meader and I am one of the many Maine Smoke Shop employee owners.

I keep finding myself in this building having to testify in the hopes I'm not suddenly unemployed due to new regulations. And new regulations aren't always bad, you know which bill I didn't testify on? Raising tobacco purchasing age to 21. Seems reasonable and in fact makes my job easier as I only have to remember one date to make sales.

However with this bill I have to ask, why 1,000 feet? Why not 2,000? Or perhaps a mile? Why not 10 miles? What if a new educational facility opens too close to one of my stores that's been operating for 20 years?

If the answer is it's for the children's sake, why does this bill not contain the same restrictions for alcohol or dispensary licenses, lottery ticket agents or any other adult product or service?

Tobacco seems to stand alone in these restrictive bills. Why not include everything? This bill is unreasonable.

And if proximity to schools makes it easier for kids to get access my next question is have any of you been in my stores? Have you seen how we operate? I invite and encourage you visit one of our locations.

You would see we ID at the door and under no circumstances are children allowed inside. Not by themselves, not with an adult, NEVER. The number of minors who have access to my stores today is zero, passing this bill has no effect on that number.

This bill is flawed because it assumes children will be exposed or have access to tobacco products based on distance to their schools. If that's the case how about distance to their homes? What about when they're out shopping? Or getting their prescriptions from Walgreens?

All this bill would accomplish is harming or closing law abiding businesses. People spend a lifetime building a business and it's wrong to take that away from them. If you're going to pass this, the bill should be amended: allow current licenses to be renewed, in the event of a sale allow license transfers, and include alcohol and dispensary licenses in the ban.

There's a real double standard with these tobacco bills. The goal is to curb addiction right? There's a flood of cannabis and alcohol based products that kids are constantly subjected to. Radio ads for flavored Cannabis vapes, Sunny D, Dunkin Donuts and Monster branded alcoholic beverages... Are those ok? Do you think those products might be targeting kids? Why aren't they included here?

Now I don't think the existence of any of these products is the problem. I believe it's minors breaking existing laws and as far as I know suffering no consequences for it.

Minors are not getting tobacco products from my stores. I'll tell you where they are getting them from, the internet. They're mail ordering them from foreign countries. Start there, shut that down. Don't shut me down, I didn't do anything wrong.

I'm all for keeping adult products out of the hands of children and this bill doesn't do it and it's not reasonable. New CDC statistics show youth smoking rates declining from 2022 to 2023, that's progress. There's a link at the bottom of the page, check it out. Don't pass this bill, it's flawed and doesn't further the cause to prevent underage tobacco use.



[https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/mm7244a1.htm#:~:text=Tobacco%20Product%20Use%20Over%20Time,from%205.2%25%20to%203.9%25\).](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/mm7244a1.htm#:~:text=Tobacco%20Product%20Use%20Over%20Time,from%205.2%25%20to%203.9%25).)

CAN YOU TELL WHICH ONES HAVE ALCOHOL?



ARE THESE TARGETING KIDS?

ARE THESE TOBACCO OR THC?



ARE THESE TARGETING KIDS?