

Testimony: in favor of raising the minimum legal sales age to 21  
February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016

To the Honorable Laurie Monnes Anderson  
Chair, Committee on Health Care  
Oregon State Senate  
Salem, Oregon

Chair Monnes Anderson and Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today. My, my name is Ori Alon, I'm a sixteen year old high school student in Portland speaking in support of raising the smoking age to 21.

I'm missing class today with the enthusiastic consent of my teachers to speak with you because something must be done about tobacco use in high schools. Here in Oregon, 24% of 11th graders like myself currently use tobacco products.

The source of this tobacco is no mystery—At any given time there is a large number of high school students in the senior class who are legally allowed to buy tobacco; it's basically a running joke, on your 18th birthday you can expect texts from younger students asking if you will buy them tobacco. This is why I support raising the smoking age to 21. If you want to reduce the number of high school students with access to tobacco, then it is critical that something be done to remove legal access to tobacco from high school social networks.

Additionally, with the recent legalization of Marijuana for Oregonians at 21 and the long-standing drinking age of 21, students feel like they are being sent mixed messages. Because Tobacco is legal at 18, my fellow classmates are getting the message from the government that tobacco is safer than alcohol or Marijuana. However, that doesn't make sense, since tobacco is the number one cause of preventable death in Oregon.

If you are serious about getting tobacco out of high schools, and serious about discouraging teenagers from using tobacco, you should raise the age at which they can buy tobacco to 21.

Thank you for allowing me to speak today, and if would like to ask any questions about the alarmingly high amount of tobacco in high schools, I would be happy to try and answer them.

Ori Alon

