



**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 1, 2016

TO: Honorable Senator Monnes Anderson
Senate Committee on Health Care

FROM: Aaron Knott, Department of Justice Legislative Director

SUBJECT: SB 1559 – Licensing of Tobacco Retailers

This testimony is presented in support of SB 1559.

BACKGROUND

State Attorneys General have long fought to protect consumers, especially our young people, from the dangers of unchecked access to tobacco products. We know that prevention of youth initiation of smoking habits is the most important check against chronic nicotine addiction throughout adult life. We must take a strong regulatory approach that includes reducing youth exposure to products that are cheap, readily available, and easy to find. Oregon law does not presently require a license to sell tobacco products. We are one of only 11 states who lack this crucial regulatory infrastructure. It is time to join the overwhelming majority of our sister states in the creation of a licensing structure which will promote accountability for tobacco retailers and meaningfully discourage the sale of tobacco products to our youth.

Similarly, raising the age of purchase to 21 is likewise consistent with the mission of this Department to protect our most vulnerable consumers from harm through intelligent consumer protection regulations. Many of our laws protect Oregonians from harm, but very few proposals can do more to save lives.

CONTACT

Please contact Department of Justice Legislative Director Aaron Knott with any questions or concerns at aaron.d.knott@doj.state.or.us or 503-798-0987.