

2017 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 177

BY REPRESENTATIVE HOFFMANN

HEALTH/SMOKING: Requests the Louisiana Department of Health to study the desirability and feasibility of increasing the minimum age to purchase tobacco products to twenty-one

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to study the desirability and
3 feasibility of increasing the minimum age to purchase tobacco products in Louisiana
4 to twenty-one.

5 WHEREAS, national data show the ages of eighteen to twenty-one are a critical
6 period when many smokers move from experimental smoking to regular, daily use; and

7 WHEREAS, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, over eighty
8 percent of adult smokers smoked their first cigarette before they turned eighteen, and
9 ninety-five percent of adult smokers begin smoking before they turn twenty-one; and

10 WHEREAS, each day in the United States, more than three thousand two hundred
11 youth aged eighteen years or younger smoke their first cigarette, and an additional two
12 thousand one hundred youth and young adults become daily cigarette smokers; and

13 WHEREAS, the developing brains of young people are particularly susceptible to
14 the addictive properties of nicotine, and tobacco industry documents show that those who
15 start smoking by the age of eighteen are almost twice as likely to become lifetime smokers
16 as those who start after they turn twenty-one; and

17 WHEREAS, increasing the tobacco sales age to twenty-one will help counter efforts
18 to target young people at a critical time when many move from experimenting with tobacco
19 to regular smoking; and

1 WHEREAS, research shows that children and adolescents often turn to older friends
2 and classmates as sources of cigarettes and raising the tobacco age to twenty-one would
3 reduce the likelihood that a high school student will be able to legally purchase tobacco
4 products for other students and underage friends; and

5 WHEREAS, electronic smoking device use among minors has recently tripled; and

6 WHEREAS, tobacco use is the foremost preventable cause of premature death in the
7 United States; and

8 WHEREAS, tobacco use is responsible for approximately four hundred eighty
9 thousand deaths a year and over twenty million premature deaths in the United States over
10 the past fifty years since the first surgeon general's report on smoking in 1964; and

11 WHEREAS, a March 2015 report by the Institute of Medicine strongly concluded
12 that raising the tobacco sale age to twenty-one will have a substantial positive impact on
13 public health and save lives; and

14 WHEREAS, the study found that raising the tobacco sale age will significantly
15 reduce the number of adolescents and young adults who start smoking, reduce
16 smoking-caused deaths, and immediately improve the health of adolescents, young adults,
17 and young mothers who would be deterred from smoking; and

18 WHEREAS, the study predicts that if the minimum age for the sale of tobacco
19 products was raised to twenty-one, over time, the adult smoking rate would decline by about
20 twelve percent and smoking-related deaths would decline by ten percent; and

21 WHEREAS, the Institute of Medicine also predicts that raising the minimum legal
22 sales age for tobacco products to twenty-one nationwide would result in two hundred
23 twenty-three thousand fewer premature deaths, fifty thousand fewer deaths from lung cancer,
24 and four million two hundred thousand fewer years of life lost for those born between 2000
25 and 2019, and that it would result in near immediate reductions in preterm birth, low birth
26 weight, and sudden infant death syndrome; and

27 WHEREAS, in 2016, California became the second state in the United States, joining
28 Hawaii, to raise the tobacco sale age to twenty-one; and

1 WHEREAS, at least two hundred and twenty-five localities in sixteen states have
2 also raised the tobacco age to twenty-one, including Washington D.C., San Francisco,
3 Boston, New York City, Chicago, Cleveland, and both Kansas cities; and

4 WHEREAS, statewide legislation to do so is also being considered in several other
5 states; and

6 WHEREAS, three-quarters of adults in the United States favor raising the minimum
7 legal sale age for tobacco products to twenty-one, including seven in ten smokers; and

8 WHEREAS, the annual economic impact of smoking in the United States is more
9 than three hundred billion dollars in healthcare and lost worker productivity costs; and

10 WHEREAS, the retail impact of ordinances mandating a minimum legal sales age
11 of twenty-one for tobacco products is minimal, with an estimated decrease of only two
12 percent; and

13 WHEREAS, raising the legal drinking age to twenty-one led to reduced alcohol use
14 and dependence among youth, and contributed to a decline in drunk driving fatalities.

15 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the
16 Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health
17 to study the desirability and feasibility of increasing the minimum age to purchase tobacco
18 products in Louisiana to twenty-one.

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department shall develop findings and
20 recommendations concerning the desirability and feasibility of increasing the minimum age
21 to purchase tobacco products to twenty-one, and shall submit such findings and
22 recommendations in the form of a written report to the House Committee on Health and
23 Welfare no later than thirty days prior to the convening of the 2018 Regular Session of the
24 Legislature.

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
26 secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HR 177 Original

2017 Regular Session

Hoffmann

Requests the La. Dept. of Health to study the desirability and feasibility of increasing the minimum age to purchase tobacco products to 21.