

In opposition to HB 4039 (Raising the Smoking
age) by _____

December 3, 2019

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present to you today.

I am against HB 4039 and any bills like it.

You know, and I know, and anyone who smokes knows that smoking is bad.

No one should smoke. **PERIOD!**

But, it's really **only** bad for the person who decides to smoke – until we get the government involved and make it our nanny. That's when it becomes bad for all of us. And, that's what this bill will do.

When I was growing up in the sixties and seventies, there was a saying that "Boys will be Boys" and that saved me and my friends many times.

It was mercy and grace on the part of the people in charge.

They knew that kids will rebel, and that if allowed to, they will learn from their mistakes.

As long as you didn't hurt anyone else but yourself, you were allowed to learn and not be crushed by the government.

Since then, the government got involved with heavy-handed "Zero Tolerance", "Mandatory Sentencing", and "Mandatory Fines laws" aimed directly at our kids. Mercy and grace is no longer allowed.

This bill is to make another "Zero Tolerance" law. It takes away the Liberty and Freedom of a whole group of what our State classifies as Adults.

Eighteen year olds are considered adults under Michigan law. They go to war, they vote for who will govern our communities, our state, and our country, they get married without parental consent, of course they are already allowed to drive, they are held legally responsible for contracts, credit cards, student debt, they are required to pay taxes, and if they commit a crime, they are tried and sentenced as adults.

The amount of proper decision making skills for those responsibilities and consequences far exceed what is needed to decide whether or not to smoke.

And, if this bill passes, what is the message we are sending our 18, 19, and 20 year old citizens? Yes, we say you are an adult, and if you make a mistake we will punish you like an adult, but we don't really believe that you are an adult and we don't trust you to make good decisions. You need the government to be your nanny.

People who want this bill to pass into law will pull at your heart strings and say things like "If we only save one life, it will be worth it", and, "It's for the good of our children, they just don't have enough experience to make these decisions on their own."

Well, if that is what we believe the threshold is to strip people of their Liberty and Freedom, then shouldn't we also make a law to stop people from selling cars? After all, we **KNOW** that people are dying in huge numbers every day from motor vehicle accidents.

When you get to the heart of the matter, it's not about tobacco use, it's about citizenship. Adult citizens in this State are supposed to be allowed to exercise their FULL Constitutional Rights and Freedoms. Those rights and freedoms are vested at the legal age of majority. In Michigan, that age is 18. If you take away their rights and freedoms with this bill, it will deny a whole group of adults (aged 18 to 20) from full participation in our society – and that is the very definition of age discrimination.

We cannot legislate moral values and/or behavior. These values must be taught. We should learn from the mistakes made by the federal government.

The "War on Poverty" has cost over \$22 Trillion dollars.

We still have poverty.

The "War on Drugs" has cost well over \$1 Trillion dollars.

And, we all know that drug use is at an all-time high.

Obviously, laws designed to change people's behavior, don't work.

But, these laws do make government bigger.

The government wants to control our behavior, based on what the people who are in control of the government at that time believe is proper behavior.

This should scare us all, no matter which political party you believe in, because control of the government changes.

Half of the time you will not be happy with how the government is trying to force you to behave. That is a loss of Liberty and Freedom.

If we give the government laws like this, we are making the government the arbiter of what is moral. We are making the bureaucrats of government our nannies. And, it is almost impossible to get rid of these laws once they are in place.

These laws also require the government to grow to police the laws. And, the more government grows, the more laws they create, and the less Freedom we have.

The only solution is to stop all legislation like this that allows the government to try and control behavior, and to educate our Citizens to make the right choices.

I am not an Advocate for the use of tobacco, I am an Advocate for Personal Liberty!

Please cast your vote AGAINST HB 4039.

Thank you.