

Legislation to raise tobacco purchasing age doesn't go far enough

16 April 2019



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The American Heart Association issued the following statement regarding the Stopping Consumption of Tobacco by Teens (SCOTT Act), a bill to raise the minimum legal sales age for tobacco products to 21 nationwide, introduced by Representatives Robert Aderholt (R-Ala.) and Juan Vargas (D-Calif.).

"We appreciate the intent of the SCOTT Act, and have long urged raising the sales age of tobacco to 21, including support for [federal legislation](#) introduced in the last Congress by Sen. Brian Schatz and Rep. Diana DeGette. Unfortunately, the bill introduced by Reps. Aderholt and Vargas has troubling language with potentially dangerous consequences.

"We are concerned about the creation of a new definition for "vapor product" created by this bill. The definition could reclassify heat-not-burn products as vapor products, circumventing critical regulations on cigarettes. One such product is IQOS, a tobacco product from Philip Morris International that is currently undergoing FDA review. If the FDA utilizes the definition of vapor

product going forward, IQOS and other heat-not-burn products could avoid cigarette marketing and advertising restrictions, prohibitions on characterizing flavors, and other rules set forth by the FDA. With the long-term impact of vapor products still unknown, we need more research about emerging [tobacco products](#) like these to determine how dangerous they are to individuals. Creating this type of classification and avoiding these regulations would benefit the [tobacco industry](#)."

"Raising the sales age for tobacco nationwide is an essential step toward reaching the tobacco endgame of eliminating tobacco use and nicotine addiction. We are willing and ready to work with both sides of the aisle to develop thorough and effective legislation that can help us stop the next generation from becoming addicted to [tobacco](#)."

Provided by American Heart Association

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