

Bobbie Walthall

From: c f <wpcorner@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 9, 2018 10:30 AM
To: Tom Markus; Matthew Herbert; Bobbie Walthall; Stuart Boley; Lisa Larsen; Leslie Soden; Jennifer Ananda
Subject: tobacco21

Dear City Commission and Staff

I just want to respond to the letter with accompanying information (i.e. propaganda) that was sent by the Douglas County Health Department to the city.

First of all, I would like to acknowledge what the person from the health department gets right...smoking can cause lung cancer. Just about everyone in Lawrence knows it. We are taught smoking is bad in school. We see commercials telling us smoking is bad. Hell, they even put a warning label on a pack of cigarettes. You would have to be a complete idiot to not know that smoking can be bad for your health.

What I question is some of information provided by the health department.

When it comes to Tobacco21 policy hurting businesses, our health department's reply is that tobacco sales to those under 21 only accounts for 2 percent of tobacco sales. A loss of 2 percent, surely a business could afford that right? What the health department doesn't mention is that Lawrence has a much higher percentage of 18-20 year olds than most American towns. According to worldpopulationreview.com, Lawrence's biggest age group is those aged 18-24, which makes up 28.7% of the population. Nationally, 18-24 year olds make up about 10 percent, which would mean we would have AT LEAST twice as many 18-20 year olds than the rest of the country. So if we have at least twice as many adults aged between 18-20 than the rest of the country, it makes since that tobacco sales in Lawrence for those under 21 would account for twice as much for a Lawrence business than the national average. How convenient of the health department to leave that part out.

Another argument the health department brings up is the argument that if you can go to war, then you can buy tobacco. Their response was that increasing the drinking age to 21 resulted in the reduced use of alcohol. To that I would respond that it also resulted in an increase of legal problems for adults aged 18-20 who were caught with liquor. The health department also uses the cop out line of "The age at which young people may join the army is an unrelated topic as to whether teens can use tobacco." First up, what's up with the language? We are talking about taking away the rights of adults aged 18-20. A 20 year old is not a teen. A 20 year old is an adult. We are talking about whether or not ADULTS can use tobacco. But of course the health department used the word teen, because it makes the age group they are trying to take rights away from seem younger and more like a minor and less like an adult. Seriously, throughout their information the health department refers to those aged 18-20 as teens or young adults, never just as adults. And what about the argument that if you can go to war, you should be able to buy tobacco. Well I say you should, but I would also say that's not the real argument. The health department left out the better argument. If you can vote, you should be able to decide whether or not you want to buy something that may be harmful to you. We let 18-20 year olds vote. That means we let them vote in elections and have a say in the policies that determine our lives. They get to help choose our leaders, and vote on local issues.

Perhaps we would have the mental health center had those under 21 not been allowed to vote. Perhaps people who need a mental health center are currently suffering because of how those aged 18-20 voted. Voting is not just making decisions for yourself; it's making decisions that affect your fellow citizens, lives. If we can let them make decisions that can have very real consequences for others, then how does it make sense that we don't let them make decisions that affect themselves.

If we deem those 18-20 as not having the maturity to know whether or not they can handle a cigarette, why in the hell are we letting them vote in elections that affect the rest of us?!?

The health department also counters the argument that “underage purchasers should be punished not retailers” with “this is a public health issue that will only be solved if kids are protected, not punished.” I would like to throw out an idea though. How about punishing parents if they have underage kids caught with tobacco.

Funny how none of the parents fighting to take away the rights from those 18-20 in order to protect their kids from tobacco are calling on the government to start handing out heavy fines to parents of kids caught smoking. Let’s be honest, a lot of underage smoking could be stopped by parents. You can buy a 10 pack of nicotine tests off amazon for 10 dollars. Would underage smoking go down if parents randomly gave weekly nicotine tests? I think it would. Start handing out large fines to the parents of kids caught with tobacco, and I think more parents might start making a lot more of an effort to make sure their kid didn’t smoke. Now maybe large fines for parents might seem extreme, but it’s not as extreme as completely taking away the rights of a group people. Call me crazy, but shouldn’t the group calling for a solution to what they think is a problem be the ones that should have to sacrifice the most? Why should someone else have to give up their freedoms to solve your problem?!

The health department says that tobacco companies are marketing e-cigs to kids with their flavors such as smores, cotton candy, and gummy bear. Yes, because kids are the only ones who like smores, cotton candy, and gummy bears. When it comes to us adults, when we inhale vapor, we want flavors like sauerkraut or liver and onions. Here’s a fun fact, I have some antacid tablets in my medicine cabinet that are berry smoothie flavored. Does that mean the antacid companies are marketing towards kids then, since there are antacids that tastes like smoothies? Maybe it just means people want to put stuff that tastes good in their mouth? I think most adults would rather suck on something sweet like candy than something tasting like regular smoke.

Candy and desserts are not just for kids. Get this, adults who smoke also enjoy smoking things that taste good and not just stuff that tastes like ass.

I’d like to bring up a fact that the health department didn’t bring up. Some minorities like Native Americans smoke more than do whites.

A higher percentage of gays and bi’s smoke than do straight people. I don’t want to stereotype, but I am guessing that most of the ones behind tobacco21 are white and straight. For a town whose city commission loves to talk about diversity and equality, how much equality is going on when you have a group of people making rules that is affecting minorities at a higher rate than it is affecting themselves?

Finally, I’d like to bring up bacon. Studies show that bacon and processed meats can cause cancer. Bacon can also contribute to obesity and the health problems that come with being obese. Why are we not also trying to ban that? Could it be because there are a lot more bacon eaters than smokers, thus the smokers are the much easier target? Why not pass a law that prohibits fat people from buying bacon? Surely the fatties that are tobacco21 supporters would have no problem with giving up their right to eat bacon, since it is for their own good and would save the rest of us non fat citizens from increased health costs that come from their heart attacks and cholesterol issues.

Thank you for reading this

Chris Flowers

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Mayor Stuart Boley
6 E. 6th St.
Lawrence, KS
66044

October 3, 2018

Dear Mayor Boley,

On behalf of the USD 497 Lawrence Public Schools Board, I am writing to express our support for adoption of a Tobacco 21 policy in Lawrence. Our students and staff provided compelling information about the extent to which tobacco use, and more specifically e-cigarette use and vaping, is a problem in our schools. A Tobacco 21 policy would help support our efforts to address this issue in the schools.

Recently, it was brought to the school district's attention that Lawrence has not been immune from the national trends of increasing use of e-cigarettes and vaping products. Our staff responded to this by identifying and implementing changes to our curriculum and conducting professional development activities to increase staff awareness of the issue. Despite this, the problem persists. Ease of access to tobacco products is one factor that contributes to this persistence.

Tobacco 21 seeks to address ease of access to tobacco, by interrupting the "social supply chain" transfer of tobacco products from 18-year-old high school students who legally obtain tobacco to underage peers. We have learned that this policy has led to reductions in underage smoking of up to 50% in other communities. This provides convincing evidence that Tobacco 21 can be effective in reducing tobacco use among our students.

We are pleased to offer our support for a Tobacco 21 policy in Lawrence. We believe this policy would have a positive and meaningful impact for our students and community. We hope that the Lawrence City Commission will adopt this policy and protect the health of our youth and students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jessica Beeson".

Jessica Beeson
School Board President
Lawrence Public Schools, USD 497

Bobbie Walthall

To: Tom Markus
Subject: RE: Lebanese Hookah House

From: bassem bassem <dr.chahine@gmail.com>

Date: September 24, 2018 at 1:43:11 PM CDT

To: Matthewjherbert@gmail.com, tmarkus@lawrenceks.org, twheeler@lawrenceks.org, dstoddard@lawrenceks.org

Subject: Lebanese Hookah House

Hello Mr. Markus

I'm emailing you again as concerns the Tobacco 21 Initiative, which it appears the Lawrence City Commission will soon be considering. As I previously mentioned, my family has owned and operated the Lawrence Hookah House at 730 Massachusetts since 2006. If the city were to approve the Tobacco 21 Initiative, it would definitely cause extensive financial hardship for my family.

So many of our customers are KU students from the Middle East and/or are Muslim, and as you may be aware as such they are not allowed to consume alcohol in any form, or really to be around anywhere it is being served. The Lawrence Hookah House serves an important function for them, much as the pool hall or a bowling alley does for students who can be around alcohol. The Lawrence Hookah House is a place for Muslim and non-Muslim students to socialize and be with like-minded friends, where alcohol is not served.

In the past I had mentioned if there would be any way for us to be grandfathered in if the Initiative were to be adopted. Do you think this might still be an option for us? If so, how would you suggest we should proceed?

Bassem Chahine