**Tobacco 21**

**Ask: Please support Senate Bill 56, an ACT relating to the sale of tobacco, alternative nicotine, and vapor products and declaring an emergency.**

**On December 20, 2019, Congress’ changes to the Tobacco Control Act explicitly prohibit retailers from selling tobacco products to anyone under the age of 21. However, there is still work to be done in Kentucky to remove status offenses and possession, use, and purchase penalties while strengthening the definition of ‘vapor product’ to include all current and future electronic nicotine delivery systems.**

**Fact**: 90% of cigarette smokers first try smoking by age 18. 1

**Fact**: Laws prohibiting the possession, use and purchase of tobacco products by minors- also known as PUP laws- are ineffective as deterrents to youth smoking and are often enforced inequitably. 2

**Fact**: PUP laws disproportionately affect youth from low-income communities and youth of color as well as LGBT youth and youth with disabilities. 3

**Fact**: Placing the responsibility on retailers with retail-focused policies, including compliance checks with youth decoys have proven more effective than PUP laws in reducing youth initiation and ongoing tobacco use. 4

**Fact**: Raising the minimum legal sale age to 21 would target the age range at which many habitual smokers consume their first cigarette and the age at which older kids are often the social source for the youngest smokers. 5

**Fact**: Evidence shows that nicotine dependence and smoking intensity are strongly correlated with younger ages of smoking initiation. 6

**Fact**: Tobacco sales to those younger than 21 years account for just 2% of total tobacco sales, yet, produce 90% of new smokers. 7

**1 American Heart Association. Youth and Tobacco: A New Crisis. www.heart.org/tobaccoendgame**

**2 American Lung Association, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, American Cancer Society, et al. Achieving Health Equity in Tobacco Control. 12/8/2015**

**3 Gottlieb NH, Loukas A, Corrao M, McAlister A, Snell C, Huang PP. Minors’ tobacco possession law violations and intentions to smoke: implications for tobacco control. Tobacco Control. 2004;13(3):237.**

**4 Forester JL, Komro KA, Wolfson M. Survey of city ordinances and local enforcement regarding commercial availability of tobacco to minors in Minnesota, United States. Tobacco Control. 1995;5(1):46-51**

**5 American Heart Association.** [**www.american.heart.org/americanheartchallenge 2019**](http://www.american.heart.org/americanheartchallenge%202019)

**6 ChangeLab Solutions.** [**www.changelabsolutions.org/tobacco-control**](http://www.changelabsolutions.org/tobacco-control)**.**

**7 Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids’ fact sheet on youth PUP laws. www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/factsheets/0074.pdf**