

Health Care Committee

SB 5296

Brief Description: *Limiting minors' access to tobacco.*

Sponsors: *By Senators Thibaudeau, Oke, Franklin, Winsley, Costa and Gardner; by request of Governor Locke and Attorney General.*

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Tobacco retailers cannot sell packages of cigarettes with less than 20 cigarettes, except in premises where minors are prohibited by law.*
- *Beginning January 1, 2002, self-service displays of tobacco products are prohibited and tobacco products sold within a store must be sold from behind counters or in locked displays. This does not pertain to retailers who sell tobacco products exclusively, or within premises where minors are not allowed by statute.*

Hearing Date: *3/23/01*

Staff: *Antonio Sanchez (786-7383).*

Background:

According to the 1998 Washington State Attorney General's Task Force report "tobacco use has been labeled as a pediatric onset disease because the average age for the onset of tobacco addiction is 14 years old. Once a child begins to use tobacco, a life long addiction is underway which often leads to disease."

In 1993, the Legislature passed the Minors' Access to Tobacco Act to address the problem of increasing tobacco use by young people. This law: (1) requires retailers to prominently display their license to sell tobacco; (2) requires warning signs be posted at each point of purchase; (3) prohibits the sale of cigarettes not in the original unopened package with a tax stamp affixed (4) requires retailers to check identification; (5) prohibits sending free tobacco products through the mail (6) requires licensing of tobacco samplers and limits sampling locations; and (7) establishes penalties for selling or giving tobacco to a minor

and for minors purchasing or attempting to purchase tobacco.

Current law does not prohibit the sale of packages of cigarettes containing less than 20 cigarettes and does not specify the location of where tobacco products must be sold from inside a retail store.

Summary of Bill:

All tobacco retailers are not allowed to sell packages of cigarettes which contain fewer than 20 cigarettes, except in premises where minors are prohibited by law.

Beginning January 1, 2002, self-service displays of tobacco products are prohibited. All tobacco products sold within a store must be sold from behind counters or in locked displays. This requirement does not pertain to retailers who sell tobacco products exclusively, or within premises where minors are not allowed by statute.

Appropriation: *None.*

Fiscal Note: *Not Requested.*

Effective Date: *Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.*