

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5365

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As of February 6, 2023

**Title:** An act relating to the purchase, use, and possession of vapor and tobacco products by minors.

**Brief Description:** Preventing use of vapor and tobacco products by minors.

**Sponsors:** Senators Saldaña, Lias, Billig, Dhingra, Hunt, Lovelett, Nguyen, Pedersen, Randall, Robinson, Stanford, Valdez, Wellman and Wilson, C..

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Labor & Commerce: 2/06/23.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Increases the maximum monetary penalties the Liquor and Cannabis Board (LCB) may impose against cigarette and tobacco products retailer licensees and vapor products retailer licensees for violations of provisions related to selling or giving cigarette, tobacco, or vapor products to minors.
- Repeals provisions that a peace officer or officer of the LCB may detain persons under 18 to determine their identity and date of birth and seize the products; and the sanctions and fines for purchasing, possessing cigarette, tobacco or vapor products by persons under 18.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & COMMERCE

**Staff:** Susan Jones (786-7404)

**Background:** Penalties and Sanctions Against Cigarette and Tobacco and Vapor Product Licensees. The Liquor and Cannabis Board (LCB) may suspend or revoke cigarette and tobacco products retailer licenses or may impose a monetary penalty, if it finds a violation

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of certain laws related to selling or giving cigarette, tobacco, or vapor products to minors. This law makes it a gross misdemeanor to sell, give or permit to be sold or given certain products to any person under 21 years of age. The products include any cigar, cigarette, cigarette paper or wrapper, tobacco in any form, or a vapor product.

The monetary penalties the LCB may impose against cigarette and tobacco products retailer licensees and vapor products retailer licensees may not exceed the following:

- \$200 for the first violation within any three-year period;
- \$600 for the second violation within any three-year period;
- \$2,000 and suspension of the license for six months for the third violation within any three-year period; and
- \$3,000 and suspension of the license for 12 months for the fourth violation within any three-year period.

The LCB may revoke the license with no possibility of reinstatement for five years for the fifth or more violation within any three-year period.

Each subsequent violation of either of the person's license counts as an additional violation within that three-year period.

The LCB may take other actions for violating these provisions, including monetary penalties against non-licensees, issuing a cease and desist orders, seeking injunctive relief, and initiating legal action. The LCB may waive or reduce penalties or licensing actions under certain circumstances.

A peace officer or LCB officer may detain persons under 18 to determine their identity and date of birth, and seize the products.

Sanctions and Fines for Purchasing, Possessing Cigarette, Tobacco or Vapor Products by Persons Under Eighteen. A person under the age of 18 who purchases or attempts to purchase, possesses, or obtains or attempts to obtain cigarette, tobacco, or vapor products commits a class 3 civil infraction, and is subject to a fine up to \$50 or participation in up to four hours of community restitution, or both. A court may also require participation in a smoking cessation program. This provision does not apply if a person under the age of 18, with parental authorization, is participating in a controlled purchase as part of an LCB, law enforcement, or local health department activity.

**Summary of Bill:** Increasing Penalties. The maximum monetary penalties the LCB may impose against cigarette and tobacco products retailer licensees and vapor products retailer licensees for violations of provisions related to selling or giving cigarette, tobacco, or vapor products to minors are increased to the following:

- \$1,000 for the first violation within any three-year period;
- \$2,500 for the second violation within any three-year period;
- \$5,000 and suspension of the license for six months for the third violation within any

- three-year period; and
- \$10,000 and suspension of the license for 12 months for the fourth violation within any three-year period.

Ninety percent of these penalties will be deposited into the Youth Tobacco and Vapor Products Prevention Account. The remaining 10 percent will be deposited into the state general fund.

Repealing Provisions. The following provisions are repealed:

- that a peace officer or officer of the LCB may detain persons under 18 to determine their identity and date of birth, and seize the products; and
- the sanctions and fines for purchasing, possessing cigarette, tobacco, or vapor products by persons under 18.

Other Provisions. The LCB, law enforcement, or a local health department may, with parental authorization, include persons under the age of 18 in compliance activities. Legislative findings are made related to vapor and tobacco usage by persons under the age of 21.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

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

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: The bill needs to hold retailers and adults accountable. Washington needs prevention programs to stop minors from using vapor and tobacco products. This bill will recognize that minors who are using these products have a disorder and require professional help. Current use and possession laws are not effective at dissuading youth from use, and the enforcement disproportionately impacts youth based on race and sexual orientation. Washington needs counter marketing to oppose the millions of dollars that vapor and tobacco sellers spend on marketing targeted at youth. The state should focus on rehabilitating youth who use these products rather than punishing them, since they are victims of predatory marketing and illegal sales. The state should instead punish the retailers making the sales to youth. There is no research showing that law enforcement helps prevent substance use among youth, and it is instead a pipeline to prison for many, especially BIPOC youth.

CON: This bill makes achieving the goals of previous legislation, reducing youth access, difficult by prohibiting enforcement. The bill dissuades officers from intervening and detaining underage people who illegally have vapor and tobacco products. Current law does not make it a crime and officers may have positive encounters with youth.

OTHER: While we agree with the intent of focusing on merchants and not ticketing youth, not allowing any underage law enforcement stops could embolden more retailers to sell products to youth as they are less likely to be caught. The LCB compliance officers need the age of a buyer to enforce the bill. We could see fewer violations issued.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Rebecca Saldaña, Prime Sponsor; Carrie Nyssen, American Lung Association; Crystal Shen, WA Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics; Carol Coram, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network; Jeff Ketchel, Washington State Public Health Association; Brittany Grant, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids; Phillip Gardiner, African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council; Elaine Ishihara, Healthy King County Coalition - Tobacco Marijuana & Other Drug Workgroup (TMOD); Rahul Sharma, LYAC; Ben Yisrael, Healthy King County Coalition.

CON: Taylor Gardner, WA Assn of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

OTHER: Marc Webster, Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** No one.