



To the Virginia House General Laws – ABC/Gaming Committee

Re: H. 790 – Hope

February 6, 2024

Chairman Krizek and Members of the Committee:

The Preventing Tobacco Addiction Foundation/Tobacco 21 thanks Delegate Hope for putting forth H. 790 to appropriately license and tax sellers of commercial nicotine products in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The ongoing youth vaping epidemic has been fueled by the largely-unregulated market of e-cigarettes and unenforced age-of-sale laws throughout the U.S. We know that most kids get their products from retail outlets in their communities. Virginia is uniquely challenged by its lack of statewide licensing for tobacco and nicotine retailers, making meaningful enforcement practically impossible. By requiring licensure, Virginia will join 41 other states who already require retail licensing and will finally be able to compile a complete list of who is selling these products, conduct regular compliance checks for each, and begin to reverse the high rates of youth nicotine and tobacco use and addiction caused by easy access.

Importantly, the penalty structure created in this bill will provide a strong deterrent for those few retailers who regularly flout the law, sell to minors, and sell products that are on their shelves illegally. This in turn will protect the vast majority of retailers who willingly comply with state and federal law, and ultimately even the playing field for all.

H. 790 is a strong first step in closing the gaps in enforcement and holding the right folks accountable for unlawful sales of nicotine and tobacco. We applaud Delegate Hope for his tireless leadership on the issue of protecting Virginia youth from the harms of tobacco use and nicotine addiction through retailer licensing. Please vote to advance H. 790 today. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

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