

# Council Minority Leader Steve Stycos and Council Member John Donegan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 1, 2019

## Proposal to Reduce Teen Smoking

*Cranston City Council Members Steve Stycos and John Donegan introduce an ordinance to reduce teen smoking by raising the age to purchase tobacco products to 21, and limit the sale of flavored tobacco products.*

Cranston, R.I. – Council Minority Leader Steve Stycos and Council Member John Donegan have introduced legislation to reduce teen smoking by raising the age to purchase tobacco products to 21, and limiting the sale of flavored tobacco products within the City of Cranston.

“As members of the City Council, we are vested with the power to preserve public health and welfare.” said Donegan, the first-term Democratic Council Member from Ward 3. “Tobacco-related diseases pose a public health crisis; one which we must tackle head on. There is no more time for inaction.”

According to the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids approximately 1,800 adults die each year, and 16,000 children currently alive today and teens die prematurely from smoking, making tobacco use the leading preventable cause of death and disease in Rhode Island. Nearly 9 out of 10 current adult cigarette smokers first started smoking and using other tobacco products by age 18. An FDA-commissioned, National Academy of Medicine study in 2015 concluded that raising the age to purchase tobacco products to 21 would result in a 15-25 percent reduction in initial use by teens aged 15 to 20. To date 18 states and over 500 localities have already raised the tobacco purchase age to 21.

"With flavors like 'Brownie,' 'Red Sweets,' and 'Watermelon,' the tobacco companies are clearly trying to entice youth into a lifetime addiction," said Stycos, the Council Minority Leader. "Once hooked, young smokers will transition to cigarettes and cigars as they age. If adults want flavored tobacco, under this proposal, they can purchase it at any of Cranston's tobacco stores."

The ordinance, if passed, would take effect July 1, 2020. The first hearing on the ordinance will take place at the Safety Services & Licenses Committee on Monday, November 4<sup>th</sup> at 6pm in the City Council Chambers at City Hall.

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