

Wallingford Considers Increasing Tobacco Age to 21

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Privacy Policy

The idea is on the table in Wallingford to raise the legal age to buy tobacco and e-cigarettes in order to combat the exploding popularity of the tobacco products among teens.

President of the Coalition for a Better Wallingford Ken Welch said vaping is an epidemic every parent should worry about.

"Thirty-five percent to 40 percent of our high schoolers are vaping," he said. "We know middle school students are doing it on the bus. Kids are selling this stuff."

He said e-cigarettes are highly addictive and dangerous.

"This is something the kids can do to get 'high' without their parents knowing about it."

In Connecticut, the legal age to purchase tobacco, including e-cigarettes, is 18.

In October, Hartford City Council voted to raise the legal age to purchase tobacco products there to 21. Now, Wallingford town council is considering a similar ordinance.

"I don't know if it's going to make much difference other than they won't be able to buy them legally," said Wallingford resident, Ralph Demusis.

"The longer you can hold them off from smoking the better off they are as far as I'm concerned," Jim Craigen of Wallingford said.

At Silver City Vapors, co-owner Martin Pizzani said while he thinks the ordinance is well intentioned, it won't work. Whether the legal age is 18 or 21, he said it should be consistent statewide.

"It's very easy for underage kids to drive across town borders and go to the next town and buy stuff," Pizzani said.

Wallingford town council plans to lay out more specifics of the proposed changes at their meeting tonight, and hopes to have a draft of the ordinance next month.