

TOBACCO ~~eighteen~~ twenty-one



American
Heart
Association®



PREVENTING TOBACCO ADDICTION FOUNDATION



March 25, 2019

The undersigned strenuously oppose HB1299, a measure that would preempt locally-elected Florida office holders from raising the minimum legal tobacco sales age or enacting local licensure for tobacco and nicotine products. This unwelcome, top-down proposal would remove the ability of local governments to protect the health and safety of their constituents, especially children.

HB1299 is especially egregious in light of the Juul e-cigarette addiction epidemic that has swept through Florida's adolescent population – with estimates that a quarter of underage teens use these slick devices. *A single Juul pod delivers highly-addictive nicotine equivalent to a pack of cigarettes.*

Many public health policy interventions such as Tobacco 21 begin at the local level. As of today, over 450 localities in 25 states, including Florida, have enacted these common-sense regulations. Alachua County recently demonstrated its health leadership by passing the first Tobacco 21 policy in the state. The effectiveness of the policy is dependent on local enforcement and a local license. As a result of Alachua's leadership, several other Florida municipalities are considering the measure.

Both state and local elected officials have the responsibility to act on urgent matters of public health and safety like that of the adolescent e-cigarette epidemic. Good health policy must be evidence-based, have public support and, above all, not be set by tobacco industry lobbyists in backrooms of the statehouse.

We urge that HB1299 be rejected.

Sincerely,

The Preventing Tobacco Addiction Foundation/Tobacco 21.org
The American Heart Association/The American Stroke Association
The American Lung Association
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
Tobacco-Free Alachua