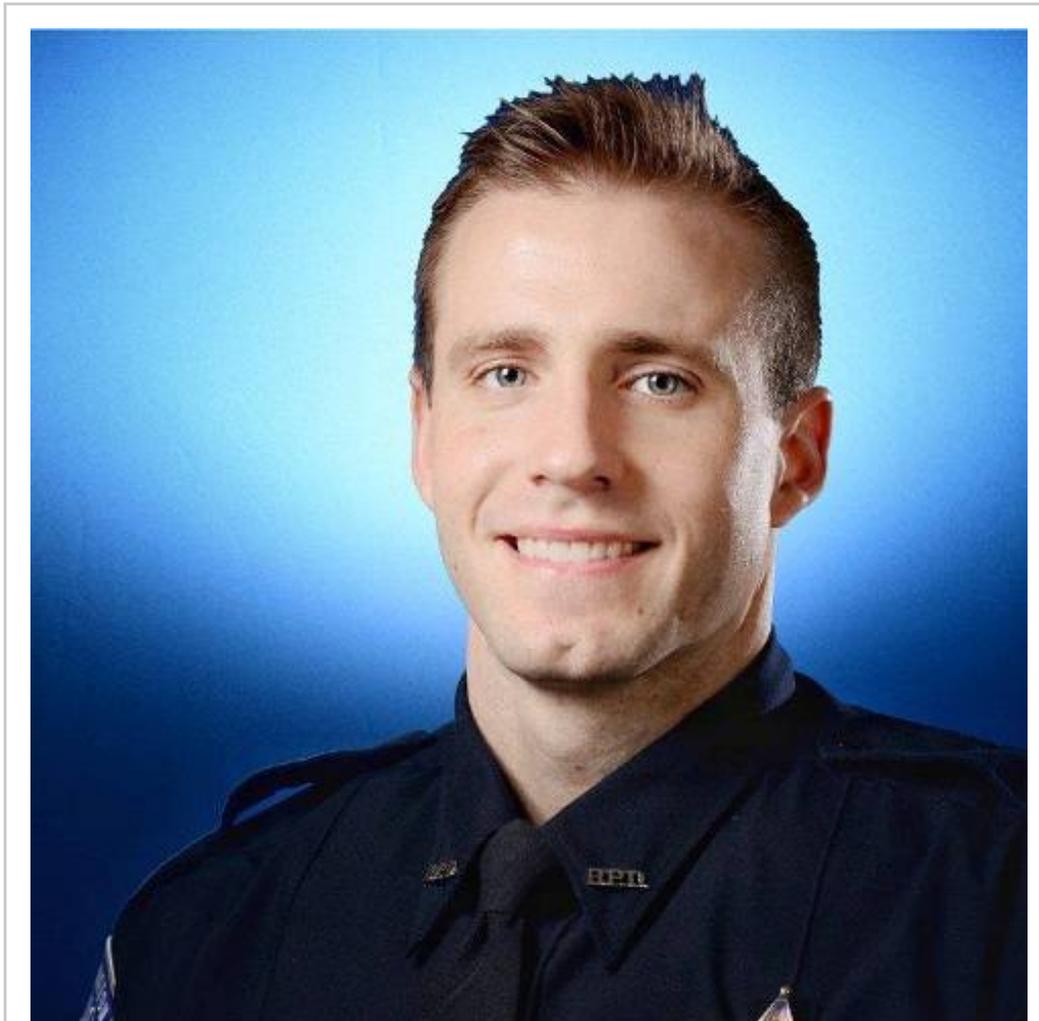


Illinois is now a “Tobacco 21” state, here’s how the law is different

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Bloomington Police Department spokesperson John Fermon said BPD is conducting compliance checks at businesses to ensure they're no longer selling tobacco to anyone under 21. (Photo John Fermon Bpd Pio/Facebook Page)

By Illinois Radio Network/Cole Lauterbach

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois is now the nation’s seventeenth “Tobacco 21” state, and while the law seems straightforward, it contains some unexpected nuances.

The law specifically prohibits the sale of any tobacco, vaping, or liquid nicotine product to anyone younger than 21 in the state of Illinois.

Bloomington Police spokesman John Fermon said his department **has been publicizing** plans for compliance checks on local businesses to make sure those businesses are abiding by the new law.

“We wanted to make sure that retailers were aware of the change and had time to prepare,” Fermon said.

The legislation also scrapped the “possession” component of Illinois law. Fermon said officers may still stop a young child smoking, but they’re not going to worry about a 19 year old smoking.

“It just eliminates the extra either fine or charge, the status offense charge,” he said. “It makes their job a little bit easier in that they don’t have to document that or worry about it.”

A breakdown of **Tobacco 21 law change**:

- Bans the sale of tobacco products, vaping products, and liquid nicotine products to anyone younger than 21.
- Removes illegal “possession” laws for underage people seen with the aforementioned products and scraps a provision that would require a minor and guardian to attend a smoking prevention class.
- Sets the legal age of selling e-cigarette products at 16 to match tobacco laws with exceptions for family-owned businesses.
- Adds e-cigarettes to products allowable for purchase by minors in orchestrating “stings” or compliance checks by law enforcement, meaning law enforcement would be able to conduct checks on vaping establishments without legality issues of a minor attempting to purchase the banned products.
- Sets delivery sales requirement for businesses to 21, up from 18.

Dozens of municipalities across the state had already banned the sale of tobacco to people younger than 21.