

public citizens for children + youth

Philadelphia Board of Health
Attn: Regulations
City Hall, Room 156
Philadelphia, PA 19107

October 12, 2016

Dear Board Members,

I am writing to express Public Citizens for Children and Youth's resounding support for the board's current proposal to modify tobacco retailer regulations and reduce children's exposure to cigarette marketing and potential use.

Public Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY) is dedicated to improving the lives and life chances of children in southeast Pennsylvania through thoughtful and informed advocacy, including driving positive change in children's health status.

The board's proposal to increase the tobacco permit fee, limit the number and locations of retailers near schools and initiate a standard penalty for repeatedly selling tobacco to minors are strong deterrents to keep kids from getting hooked on deadly and addictive tobacco products.

Philadelphia's poorest children are hit hardest, and they have the fewest defenses to fight back. The City's low income neighborhoods have 69% more tobacco retailers *overall* and 63% more tobacco retailers *within 500 feet of schools* than high income neighborhoods. Moreover, tobacco retailers near schools place more tobacco marketing materials near candy and other child-centric products than tobacco retailers in other locations. Our children need safe corridors to travel to school, and the regulation changes the board is advancing will get us closer to this goal.

Strengthening the regulations could also be viewed as a potential school attendance booster. Cigarette smoke is a very common child asthma trigger, and when students are sick, they are often absent from school. PCCY will release a report on child well-being in Philadelphia at the end of this month, and we will show that more than one in five Philadelphia students have asthma, and that the rate of child asthma hospitalizations increased slightly from 2008 to 2013.

PCCY applauds the Board of Health's efforts to further protect the City's children from sickness and harm and help them realize their full potential.

Sincerely,



Donna Cooper
Executive Director



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