



Media Contact:

Stacy Shelp, Public Information Officer
Phone: (919) 245-2462 or Cell: (919) 636-8842
sshelp@orangecountync.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOCAL TEENS SEEK CHANGE AHEAD OF NEW NATIONAL STUDY SHOWING POPULAR SUPPORT FOR RAISING TOBACCO BUYING AGE TO 21

Orange County, NC (July 13, 2015) – On July 7th, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a press release stating that 75 percent of American adults, including 70 percent of cigarette smokers, favor making 21 the minimum age of sale for tobacco products. The research was published in the [American Journal of Preventive Medicine](#).

The same press release also states that “Age-of-sale restrictions have been shown to contribute to reductions in tobacco use and dependency among youth. In March, 2015, an Institute of Medicine (IOM) [report](#) found that increasing the legal age of sale for tobacco will likely delay tobacco use initiation by adolescents and young adults. The IOM found that if all states were to raise the minimum age of sale for all tobacco products to 21, there would be a 12 percent decrease in cigarette smoking over the next generation. This would translate into nearly 250,000 fewer premature deaths from cigarette smoking among people born between 2000 and 2019.”

In January 2015, local high school students who are members of the Tobacco Reality Unfiltered clubs at Orange High School and Carrboro High School, petitioned peers and educators at their schools. They collected 318 signatures in support of increasing the minimum legal sale age to 21. Of the signatures on the petition, 290 were high school students (44 of whom are 18 years or older) and 28 adults.

“Many teens can easily access tobacco through people who are 18 or 19. Because of this, we feel that tobacco shouldn’t be sold to people younger than 21. We have collected over 300 signatures from people, mostly high school students, who agree with this. Tobacco use is steadily increasing, and people should take that into consideration and help stop it,” said Shanaera Davis, an Orange High School TRU Club member.

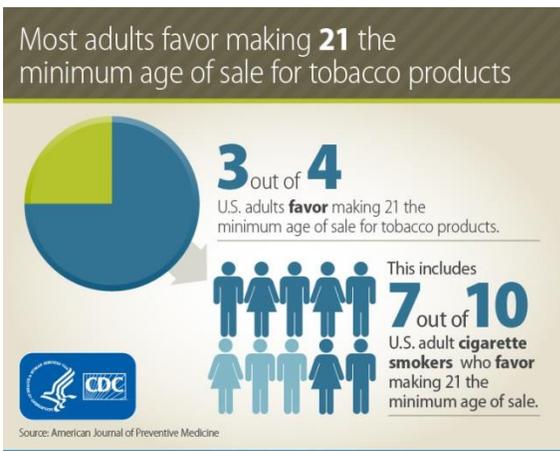
According to the [Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids](#), more than 68 cities and counties in eight states have done the same. Hawaii recently became the first state to raise the tobacco sale age to 21. In North Carolina, state law preempts local governments from regulating the sale, distribution, display or promotion of tobacco products (including e-cigarettes), which prevents counties and towns from increasing the minimum legal sale age. Local control and ability to pass such a policy would be restored if the General Assembly rescinded preemption, or a law to increase the sale age could to be adopted at the state level. Recently the Orange County Board of Health and the County Commissioners expressed their support for raising the legal sale age to 21.



Pictured (Left to Right): TRU members Shanaera Davis and Kintwon Pettiford reviewing signatures on petition.



Pictured (Left to Right): Kintwon Pettiford, Katelyn Owens, and Shanaera Davis



Caption: CDC Infographic

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