



Missouri House of Representatives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
January 6, 2025

CONTACT: State Rep. Brad Christ
Brad.Christ@House.Mo.Gov

State Rep. Brad Christ Pre-Files Bill to Raise Minimum Age to Purchase Tobacco Products

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – State Representative Brad Christ announced the pre-filing of House Bill 503, which aims to protect Missouri youth by raising the minimum age to buy cigarettes to 21. Missouri law currently requires buyers to be 18 or older.

The bill follows a broader concern around the prevalence of smoking-related health issues among young Missourians. Public health officials have emphasized that habits formed early in life are particularly challenging to break later, and the additional time would allow young brains a few more years to develop discernment around using tobacco.

"I don't take adding additional burdens to people's freedoms lightly," Christ, R-St. Louis, stated. "However, there is overwhelming evidence and research to suggest that smoking is detrimental to overall health, and this change would bring smoking and the use of other tobacco products in line with how we treat other dangerous substances, such as alcohol, making public health and safety a priority."

If HB 503 passes this legislative session, raising the age to 21 is expected to help prevent illegal tobacco purchasing by minors, reducing underage smoking rates. This measure would be preventative in hopes of decreasing the likelihood of lifelong tobacco addiction.

"The legislation is focused on preventing bad habits before they start," added Christ. "By setting the minimum age at 21, we can prevent most young people from ever picking up a cigarette, effectively improving their long-term health and potentially adding years to their lives."

HB 503 has already garnered early support from health professionals and cancer advocates.

Representative Brad Christ, a Republican, represents part of St. Louis County (District 96) in the Missouri House of Representatives. He was elected to his first two-year term in November 2022. For more information, please contact Rep. Christ by email at Brad.Christ@House.Mo.Gov.

-###-