

Williams, Brenda

From: Trianfo, Alison on behalf of Landsman, Greg
Sent: Monday, April 02, 2018 3:53 PM
To: Williams, Brenda
Cc: Lynch, Mounir (lynchmr)
Subject: FW: [External Email] A letter to my City Council representatives
Attachments: Letter to the city council .docx

201800597

Brenda,

Please add Mounir Lynch's email and attached letter as a communication to this week's council calendar.

Thank you!

Ali

From: Lynch, Mounir (lynchmr) [mailto:lynchmr@mail.uc.edu]
Sent: Monday, March 26, 2018 1:57 PM
To: #COUNCIL <#COUNCIL@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Smitherman, Christopher <Christopher.Smitherman@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Dennard, Tamaya <Tamaya.Dennard@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Landsman, Greg <Greg.Landsman@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Mann, David <david.mann@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Murray, Amy <amy.murray@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Pastor, Jeff <Jeff.Pastor@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Seelbach, Chris <Chris.Seelbach@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Sittenfeld, P.G. <P.G.Sittenfeld@cincinnati-oh.gov>; Young, Wendell <Wendell.Young@cincinnati-oh.gov>
Subject: [External Email] A letter to my City Council representatives

External Email Communication

All,

My name is Mounir Lynch and I am a student at the University of Cincinnati and a proud constituent of yours. Attached I have written a letter to you all about a policy that I am very passionate about. I hope you will consider reading the letter and potentially having a conversation about this issue.

Thank you for your time,

Mounir Lynch

Mounir Lynch

Health Promotion and Education - Public and Community Health

Peer Wellness Educator - UC Student Wellness Center

Opinion Editor - The News Record UC

University of Cincinnati

(614) 753-1833

To the Cincinnati City Council,

My name is Mounir Lynch and I am a 3rd year student of Health Promotion and Education at the University of Cincinnati and a Peer Health Educator at our Student Wellness Center. I have created many programs for our office and been fortunate enough to learn about the community health of not only the student population but of the city of Cincinnati as a whole. I have become more familiar with the city and the issues our citizens go through at my time with our school's newspaper, The News Record. I am also very passionate about policy and activism, especially at the local level. Someday, I hope to follow in your footsteps.

I am originally from Columbus, OH and have made my home here in Cincinnati. I have met many of the councilmembers, and commend you all for treating me with the utmost respect. It is clear that each and every one of you, regardless of political affiliation, care deeply about this city and its residents.

Today I am reaching out to you all as my representatives to ask that you consider drafting legislation for this city that will make our community cleaner and healthier. It will also cut down on income inequality and health disparities that exist in this city.

That policy is raising the minimum age to purchase Tobacco to 21 years old.

Cities across the country have implemented what is known as Tobacco 21 policies, and I believe that Cincinnati can move many steps forward by implementing a Tobacco 21 policy of our own.

As raising the legal tobacco age to 21 is only recently becoming more widespread, the research behind the benefits of these policies is limited. However, there are many clear reasons why communities around the country, including several states and major cities, implement these policies in the first place.

First, raising the minimum tobacco age creates a cleaner environment in the city. In May of 2017, the University of Cincinnati implemented a tobacco free policy known as Tobacco Free UC. The use of all nicotine delivery systems is banned on campus. Since the implementation of Tobacco Free UC, the amount of litter from cigarette butts has decreased exponentially. Furthermore, secondhand smoke is now nearly non-existent. Cigarette fills the surrounding environment with pollutants and toxins that over time have an affect on our atmosphere.

Although I do not encourage banning public smoking in Cincinnati as a realistic policy, it has been proven by several public health researchers that secondhand smoke exposure is just as harmful to health as direct tobacco use. Secondhand smoke exposes non-smokers to the many toxins and chemicals in cigarette smoke that are detrimental to health. Increasing the legal tobacco age to 21 reduces the amount of smokers, eliminating a significant amount of waste and smoke pollution in the city.

Furthermore, widespread tobacco use among lower-income individuals is more common than among higher-income individuals. This is a direct, clear example of class warfare and inequity that can easily be prevented in our city.

I attended high school in the low-income, high crime neighborhood of South Linden, Columbus where I experienced directly the effects of income inequality on urban areas. How does this

connect to tobacco use? A lack of access to transportation to grocery stores, usually far away from low income neighborhoods, brings people into convenience stores that sell a large selection of various tobacco products.

Many kids and young adults have to work to take care of their families. Many of them have to do the grocery shopping for their aging or disabled families or family members going through drug addiction. Their access to tobacco is directly increased by regular shopping at convenience stores, locations that big tobacco corporations intentionally target for tobacco sales.

According to the U.S Department of Labor, young non-smokers can save upwards of \$10,000 annually by cutting the expense of regular tobacco use. This money can go in to our communities and in the pockets of struggling people.

Finally, it is a well known fact that tobacco use is the number one preventable cause of death in the United States and worldwide. Lung cancer has the highest mortality rate of any other cancer, and nearly every case of lung cancer has been connected to tobacco use (according to the CDC). Frankly, tobacco use is just about the worst health behavior one can exhibit.

A large proportion of smokers begin smoking between the ages of 18-21, with many of those smokers becoming regular smokers while in that age range. When we ban the sale of tobacco for individuals under the age of 21, we can prevent a massive number of people from becoming regular smokers. Of course, using tobacco from a young age can easily lead to long term use.

Tobacco 21 policy is deeply connected to my personal life. My father began smoking at the age of 16. After an adolescence of regular tobacco use, he became reliant on nicotine and smoked more than a pack a day for 35 years. He now struggles with osteoporosis, poor dental health, as well as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), which has all but eliminated his physical strength and ability to breathe without constant oxygen. COPD is one of the most common causes of death in this country.

By increasing the minimum age of tobacco sales, we will create a cleaner, healthier and more wealthy community.

I call upon you as my elected representatives to consider drafting a Tobacco 21 policy in this city. For a better future and to protect our up and coming generations.

Feel free to contact me at any time. I would love to hear your thoughts.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Mounir Lynch
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