

Rhode Island Chapter

INCORPORATED IN RHODE ISLAND

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



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Testimony supporting House Bill 7127

House Finance Committee

Feburary 4th 2026

Dear Chairperson Abney and Members of the Committee,

The Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics **supports H-7127**, which proposes an increase in the cigarette tax for each cigarette sold or unstamped from 225 mills to 262.5 mills, for an increase of \$0.75 per 20-pack of cigarettes and raising the per-cigar tax cap from \$0.50 to \$2 proposed in Budget Article 5, Sections 3-4..

Tobacco use continues to be the most common cause of preventable disease and death in the United States, and nearly all tobacco use begins during adolescence and young adulthood.¹ These products all contain nicotine, a highly addictive drug that can have damaging effects on adolescent brain development. As a pediatrician, I hear from my patients about their struggles with tobacco products almost every day- teens who are hooked on nicotine and are unable to quit.

By increasing the price of tobacco products through excise tax, you can effectively prevent initiation of tobacco use, promote cessation, and reduce the prevalence and intensity of tobacco use among adolescents and young adults.⁴ This strategy is particularly effective at discouraging initiation among youth. Excise taxes can also raise tax revenue and reduce health care-related costs associated with the tobacco related diseases.⁴

Preventing tobacco product use among youth is critical to ending the tobacco epidemic and the downstream impacts on our health. **We urge you to support H-7127.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allison Heinly".

Allison Heinly, MD, FAAP
Board of Directors
Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

¹ Center for Disease Control and Prevention. [Youth and Tobacco Use](#).

² Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Youth Behavior Risk Survey, 2023.

³ World Health Organization. [Heated tobacco products: summary of research and evidence of health impacts](#). 2023.

⁴ Center for Disease Control. [STATE System Excise Tax Fact Sheet](#).