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As we observe the point counterpoint in regard to the underage restriction of ultraviolet radiation tanning, one thing becomes obvious. There is an elephant in the room and no one seems willing to talk about it.

Tanning parlors oppose a restriction by age to ultraviolet radiation tanning. Their agenda is obvious. They do not want a partial source of income encumbered regardless of the harm that may result.

The medical profession and most concerned and knowledgeable citizens want a ban on ultraviolet radiation tanning for people under the age of 18 for young people who may not be educated in the adverse effects or have not developed good judgment. Thus the medical profession is promoting the health and safety of all children during their most vulnerable years and reducing their future cost of health care. Why? If the medical profession would just sit back and keep quiet, they would have a source of revenue from treatment of damaged skin, cancer and other diagnoses for years to come.

I want to be clear on one thing. My wife and I are opposed to big government and government control over our choices. But in these times of single parent and dual income child rearing, young, impressionable, and often unattended children cannot be supervised properly and must be protected from themselves. I'm convinced that I'm here today, as a contributing taxpayer, only because I was protected from my own youthful bad judgments.

My background is in another form of radiation—X-ray radiation. Years ago, X-rays were used by dentists who were erroneously informed about its safety and literally burned off their fingers and developed skin cancers before we realized what was causing it. We used X-rays to fit shoes for children and adults prior to the damaging results being discovered years later. People who stood to gain from the sale of such devices claimed they were safe. A drastic comparison? Maybe? Maybe not? In order to protect our grandchildren, we will be urging a vote for the medical profession's unselfish recommendation for House Bill 230 and not the tanning parlor's alleged and self serving assurance of safety when all the evidence shows that tanning parlor ultraviolet radiation is very unhealthy and unsafe for children during the most vulnerable years of their lives. Please pass House Bill 230. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dennis and Carol Coler

Footnote:

Ionizing radiation (such as x-ray radiation) is a more potent mutagen than UV is highly technical. Ionizing radiation has the ability to break chemical bonds, creating ion pairs (hence its name). Its action is totally random and indiscriminate. Thus, it can directly ionize DNA. Water is the most likely molecular target, since it is the most common molecule in living systems. Water ions rapidly create free radicals, which then attack macromolecules, such as DNA. In general, UV radiation is less energetic than x-rays and while some of the most energetic UV photons are capable of producing ionization, many UV photons are nonionizing. The UV radiation may induce mutagenesis through a molecular mechanism that results in the formation of thymidine dimers. That is, it crosslinks two thymidine residues in DNA. In addition to these differences in production of molecular damage, there are differences in cellular capabilities to repair these damages.