



Cultivating a World Class Education

WINTON WOODS
CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Winton Woods Elementary School

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Representative Tom Brinkman, Chairman
Commerce and Labor Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
3215 Hardisty Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45208

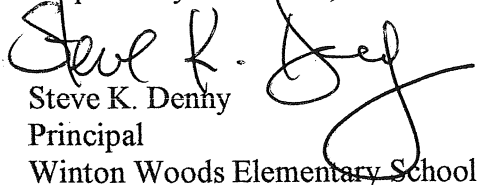
Dear Chairman Brinkman and Members of the Commerce and Labor Committee,

I am writing to you in support of House Bill #230.

I am an elementary school principal in Forest Park, Ohio but I also spent thirteen years working with and teaching teenagers mathematics in middle school and high school in three different states. Young people are the reason that I do what I do and they, almost certainly like you & I were when we were their age, tend to think of themselves as invincible. They never dream that something bad could happen to them. They do slowly begin to become aware in their late-teen years that their choices have consequences that can be far-reaching, significant and potentially life-changing. The age of 40 seems ancient to them and they do not realize how quickly the years begin to hurtle past as we enter adulthood. Likewise most have great difficulty seeing and cannot really appreciate that many of the decisions we make as teenagers follow us for the rest of our lives. In many ways, they are not yet well-equipped to understand the ramifications of their own decisions. While helping them understand this dynamic is clearly the job of parents, it is also the role of educators and even legislators. This is where you come in of course. Children, even young adults—especially young adults at times—need to be protected from certain decisions that they can readily make. This is of course where prohibitions against alcohol consumption until the age of twenty-one and tobacco use until the age of eighteen come into play. In point of fact, it has been a well-recognized medical fact that tobacco is a carcinogen. As a result, young people must be of legal age to use it. The same can be said of using a tanning bed. The Food & Drug Administration has ruled that tanning rays are carcinogenic agents and the World Health Organization has recently recommended that no one under the age of 18 use tanning beds or sunlamps. Tanning parlor rays even penetrate the skin more deeply and do more harm than natural sunlight. If cigarettes, a known cancer-causing agent, are limited to those of the age of majority, shouldn't tanning salons be treated in the same fashion? Again, this is a situation where parents, educators, community members and legislators should come together to protect our young people from potentially life-threatening decisions that they can otherwise readily make for themselves.

I, along with many other like-minded educators, urge you to pass House Bill #230. This will help keep our kids safe well into their adult years and can help to abate mounting health care costs in years to come.

Respectfully Submitted,


Steve K. Denny
Principal
Winton Woods Elementary School