

Youth Purchase, Use, Possession (PUP) Laws Are Not Effective Tobacco Prevention

What are PUP laws?

Michigan laws prohibiting and penalizing the possession, use, and purchase of tobacco products by minors — also known as PUP laws — are ineffective as deterrents to youth smoking and are often enforced inequitably.

Ineffective

- Penalizing children is not an effective strategy for reducing youth smoking and often deters youth from seeking support for cessation.
- Enforcement of restrictions against sales to minors is the way to minimize accessibility of tobacco products to minors.
- Penalizing youth diverts enforcement officials from stopping retailers from illegally selling tobacco products to kids in the first place.
- It is more challenging to enforce PUP laws than it is to enforce laws that restrict sales to minors.

Inequitable

- PUP laws disproportionately affect youth of color, as well as LGBTQ+ youth, youth with disabilities who are actively targeted by the tobacco industry.
- These laws also affect youth from low-income communities at a higher rate as there are more tobacco retailers and advertisers in less affluent areas.

Counterproductive

- Research suggests that PUP penalties are counterproductive because they make smoking more attractive to youth who want to act like adults or engage in rebellious behavior.
- Further stigmatizing and criminalizing youth smoking makes it even more difficult for those who want to quit and seek resources.

End ineffective and inequitable policies punishing Michigan kids

