

SALE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS TO MINORS

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 1988
Reviewed by Board of Managers January 2010

- WHEREAS,** More than six million Americans under the age of 18 use tobacco and they spend nearly one billion dollars per year on tobacco products; and
- WHEREAS,** Sixty percent of smokers begin smoking by the age of 14, and the earlier a child starts using tobacco, the more likely it is that he or she will be unable to quit, and may subsequently die of a tobacco-induced disease; and
- WHEREAS,** The California State Penal Code, Section 308, prohibits the sale of tobacco products to any person under 18 years of age and requires all merchants selling tobacco to post a warning notice reflecting this law; and
- WHEREAS,** Minors have no difficulty purchasing tobacco products; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to urge local law enforcement agencies to more effectively monitor business establishments in their respective communities to determine if the law regarding sale of tobacco products to minors is being upheld; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA encourage its units, councils and districts to educate parents and the business community to the dangers of tobacco use and about the existing laws which prohibit the sale of tobacco products to minors; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA encourage its units, councils and districts to seek the support of the business community and law enforcement agencies in complying with these existing laws; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA forward this resolution to the National PTA for presentation to the 1988 National Convention delegates, with the recommendation that the National PTA urge its constituent bodies to work toward the elimination of the sale of tobacco products to minors in accordance with the laws of the individual states.

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Continued on next page

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Tobacco contains a powerfully addictive drug, nicotine, that is a serious threat to the health of children and adolescents. Children who smoke increase their risk of having serious long-term health problems including heart disease, cancer and emphysema. Parents have the right to expect that their children will not be sold harmful addictive products, and the business community has the responsibility to comply with laws to protect children. (From Tobacco-Free Youth Project material, 1988, Santa Clara County.)

Historically, the California State PTA has supported the enforcement of laws governing the sale of cigarettes to children of school age. (CSPTA 1921 Resolution on “Sale of Cigarettes to School Age Children.”)

At the 1987 National PTA Convention, the delegates adopted a resolution entitled “Education About the Dangers of Tobacco Products,” which states that the National PTA participate with other organizations in public service ad campaigns to educate the public about the dangers of the use of tobacco products, their effects on children and the true cost of the use of tobacco products to society as a whole.