

1 By Supervisors Vincent, Logsdon, Shea, Eckblad,
2 Nicholson, Capriolo, Rolland, O'Connor,
3 and Coggs-Jones
4
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File No. 25-358

6 **AN AMENDED RESOLUTION**
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8 Urging state lawmakers to pass legislation that would set a minimum age of 21 to
9 purchase tobacco products, vapor products, marijuana, synthetic cannabinoids, and
10 drug paraphernalia
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13 WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services reported that 66% of
14 high schoolers said it is “easy to get tobacco products;” and
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16 WHEREAS, Wisconsin’s underage tobacco sales rate is more than double the
17 pre-pandemic rate – up to 13.6% in 2023 from 5.5% in 2019; and
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19 WHEREAS, in 2023, 16.2% of high school aged youth in Wisconsin had used
20 marijuana one or more times in the previous 30 days; and
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22 WHEREAS, vaping can harm young people’s mental health and brain
23 development by exacerbating anxiety and depression as users become addicted; and
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25 WHEREAS, in 2019, the federal legal age for purchasing tobacco was raised
26 from 18 to 21; and
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28 WHEREAS, 2019 Assembly Bill 422 relating to raising the legal age for tobacco
29 and vaping to 21 passed the State Assembly, but the companion State Senate bill was
30 not brought to a floor vote; and
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32 WHEREAS, in his written testimony on Assembly Bill 422, then State
33 Representative David Crowley said, “In an internal document from 1982, a tobacco
34 researcher stated that, ‘If a man has never smoked by the age of 18, the odds are
35 three-to-one he never will. By age 24, the odds are twenty-to-one.’ That is why it is
36 critical to keep Wisconsin youth shielded from becoming regular smokers;” and
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38 WHEREAS, in 2022, similar legislation was reintroduced and passed the State
39 Assembly but was not brought to a floor vote of the State Senate; and
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41 WHEREAS, these state bills received vast community support, including from
42 parents, students, healthcare workers, educators, school administrators, law
43 enforcement, and retailers; and
44

45 WHEREAS, Wisconsin remains one of only eight states that has not passed a
46 statewide Tobacco 21 Law that would raise the minimum legal age in Wisconsin for
47 tobacco products to 21; and
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49 WHEREAS, local law enforcement agencies are not mandated to enforce the
50 federal legal age without a comparable law at the state; and
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52 WHEREAS, a report by the National Academy of Sciences projected that if the
53 entire country enacted Tobacco 21 legislation there would be a 25% drop in smoking
54 initiation among high school students; and
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56 WHEREAS, implementing a requirement for retailers to confirm the age of
57 customers of tobacco products, vapor products, marijuana, synthetic cannabinoids, and
58 drug paraphernalia with a photo ID is critical to ensure that retailers are compliant with
59 statewide Tobacco 21 legislation; and
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61 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County is committed to being the healthiest county in
62 Wisconsin; and
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64 WHEREAS, the safety and wellbeing of the residents and young people of
65 Milwaukee County, and the state of Wisconsin are of paramount importance to policy
66 makers, and
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68 WHEREAS, local governments and their elected representatives have a
69 responsibility to advocate for policies that promote the safety and security of their
70 communities, even when preempted from creating local regulations on this issue; and
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72 **WHEREAS, at the County Board of Supervisors meeting on June 26, 2025,**
73 **concerns were raised that legislation such as 2019 Assembly Bill 422 may**
74 **contribute to the increased criminalization of young adults, instead of focusing**
75 **accountability on retailers and other businesses that illegally sell products to**
76 **individuals under the age of 21; and**
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78 WHEREAS, the Committee on Intergovernmental Relations (IGR), at its meeting
79 of June 9, 2025, recommended adoption of File No. 25-358 (vote 5-0); and
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81 WHEREAS, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, at its meeting of
82 June 26, 2025, referred File No. 25-358 to the Committee on IGR (vote 16-0); and

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84 WHEREAS, the Committee on IGR, at its meeting of July 7, 2025, recommended
85 adoption of File No. 25-358 as amended (vote 5-0); now, therefore,
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87 BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors urges the
88 Wisconsin State Legislature to enact legislation to set a minimum age of 21 to purchase
89 tobacco products, vapor products, marijuana, synthetic cannabinoids, and drug
90 paraphernalia, **and to ensure that enforcement of this policy focuses on holding**
91 **retailers and businesses accountable for illegal sales, rather than criminalizing**
92 **young adults**; and
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94 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
95 urges the Wisconsin State Legislature to enact legislation to implement a requirement
96 for retailers to confirm the age of customers of tobacco products, vapor products,
97 marijuana, synthetic cannabinoids, and drug paraphernalia with a photo ID to ensure
98 compliance with the Tobacco 21 legislation; and
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100 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Milwaukee County Office of Government
101 Affairs is authorized and requested to communicate the contents of this resolution to the
102 Governor, members of the Wisconsin State Legislature and the Wisconsin Counties
103 Association to promote legislative action that will help keep Wisconsin youth healthy
104 and safe.
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108 s:\\committees\\2025\\july\\igr july 7\\resolutions\\25-358 vincent resolution supporting raised tobacco age.docx