

Greetings!

I am reaching out today to request your support for House Bill 1570, which aims to elevate the tax on commercial tobacco and establish equal taxation across all tobacco products.

While this bill certainly aims to boost revenue, its broader objective is to protect our youth from nicotine addiction and the habit of using commercial tobacco products. Since the majority of adult smokers begin their habit before turning 18, implementing tobacco taxes is a proven method to deter young people and young adults from starting.

As a former North Dakota Quitline Counselor, it is imperative to continue making tobacco use and related products unattractive to potential new and existing users due to the well-established research on its harmfulness.

With a current rate of just \$.44 per pack, North Dakota's cigarette tax ranks 49th nationwide and is significantly below the average U.S. state cigarette tax, which is \$1.97 per pack. The last increase in North Dakota's cigarette tax was in 1993.

It's crucial that we take stronger measures to safeguard our youth, and HB 1570 is a step in that vital direction. I strongly encourage your support!

Thank you!