

PREMIUM CIGAR ASSOCIATION ON SENATE BILL 288



WHO WE ARE

Founded in 1933, the Premium Cigar Association (PCA) is a not-for-profit trade association representing premium cigar and pipe tobacco specialty stores, including the **premium cigar and pipe tobacco retailers in Vermont**. Our brick-and-mortar members are family-owned small businesses who employ an average of 6 people from their local communities. Premium cigars account for 80% of all PCA members' sales. Unlike mass-produced tobacco products, a premium cigar is a handcrafted, artisanal product that takes 3 to 5 years to hit the market.

PCA MEMBERS OPERATE ADULT-ONLY ESTABLISHMENTS

Premium cigar and pipe tobacco specialty stores are adult-only businesses run by professional tobacconists. Premium cigars and pipe tobacco are not available for sale in convenience stores or other non-specialty stores accessible by youth because they are highly perishable, requiring special care in a controlled humidified environment by a professional tobacconist.

THE PROBLEM

Broad language in SB 288 extends far beyond banning tobacco products that are being marketed to and used by youth. With vast room for interpretation, SB 288 bans premium cigars and pipe tobacco which are sold in adult-only specialty stores. For many retailers, mass market tobacco sales are incidental to their businesses, but premium cigar and pipe tobacco specialty stores cannot make up lost revenue from a tobacco sales ban by selling food, milk, or gasoline.

THE SOLUTION

Amend SB 288 to remove adult-only premium cigar and pipe tobacco specialty stores from the scope of the legislation.

FLAVOR DESCRIPTIONS

Much like coffee or fine wines and spirits, premium cigars and pipe tobacco are luxury products described with tasting notes, even though they may not contain flavor additives, as demonstrated by this review: *"Every last leaf in this blend is Nicaraguan and every puff is an overture of flavors that's at times heavy and rich with notes of dark chocolate and wood, and other times, subtle and understated with hints of fine caramel and toasted almonds. In musical terms, the word for this box-pressed torpedo would be dynamic."*

PRECEDENT

Massachusetts is the first and only state to pass into law a flavored tobacco ban that extends beyond vapor products. In 2019, the Commonwealth recognized that unique, adult-only purveyors of premium tobacco products are different than other tobacco retailers. Premium cigar and pipe tobacco specialty stores were excluded from the Massachusetts flavor ban.

DATA

Analyzed data in the NIH and the FDA's PATH Study is specific to premium cigars —often other studies lump premium cigars with products like cigarettes, e-cigarettes, or non-premium cigars that are machine made, have flavor additives, and are sold in C-stores. The data collected in this study demonstrates that:



The average age of an individual's first premium cigar is **30 years old** — compared to 16.7 years old for cigarettes.

1.2

The average **premium cigar consumer smokes 1.2 days out of every 30** --compared to 29.6 days out of 30 for cigarette smokers.



There is no meaningful correlation between premium cigars and cigarette smoking.