

Englewood ban on under-21 tobacco sales criticized by convenience store group

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Englewood raised the legal tobacco age to 21, becoming the first municipality in the state to do so. Myles Ma/NJ.com

ENGLEWOOD — The head of an advocacy group for gas station and convenience store owners said a citywide ban on tobacco and nicotine sales to anyone under 21 would hurt small businesses, the Record reported.

The city's new ordinance applies to cigarettes, cigars and e-cigarettes. It is the first in the state to raise the legal age since 2006, when it was raised from 18 to 19.

The Senate approved a bill in June that would raise the age to 21 statewide. New Jersey would be the first state to increase the legal age to 21.

Small-business owners in Englewood will lose customers to competitors in neighboring towns because of the ordinance, Sal Risalvato, executive director of the New Jersey Gasoline-Convenience-Automotive Association, said.

Council President Lynne Algrant said any detriment to businesses wouldn't outweigh the health benefits of the ban.

"I think we should do everything we can to put roadblocks between kids and their impulsiveness and all the other reasons they try cigarettes," she said.

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