



PRESS RELEASE

ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY CONCERNED ABOUT IMPLEMENTATION OF TOBACCO 21

August 19, 2019
Felix Rivera, Assembly Chair

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

It has come to the attention of members of the Anchorage Assembly that several retailers have terminated employees under the age of 21 due to a misinterpretation of a recently passed Anchorage Ordinance which raised the age to purchase tobacco products to 21, AO 2019-90(S). The current ordinance does not prohibit employees under the age of 21 in certain retail stores from handling tobacco products.

During deliberation of this ordinance, the Assembly passed an amendment proposed by Assembly Member Pete Petersen to carve out an exception in the law to allow 19 and 20 year-olds to continue working for “adult-only” tobacco stores – or tobacconists - if those employees were hired before August 20, 2019. For all other retailers, such as gas stations, convenience stores, or grocery stores, there is no restriction or limitation on those retail stores hiring or employing workers under 21. The restriction limits only the owners or managers of “adults-only” tobacco establishments – tobacconists - from employing employees 19 or 20 years old hired AFTER August 20, 2019.

The termination of employees is unneeded due to the forward thinking of Mr. Petersen and the Assembly and we ask tobacco retailers to review the ordinance and cease firing of employees under the age of 21.

For additional information, please go to the Anchorage Health Department’s Tobacco 21 webpage at www.muni.org/tobacco21 or to the Assembly’s webpage at www.muni.org/assembly under “Items of Interest” for the full text of the ordinance and the Petersen amendment.

###

CONTACT:

Judy Jessen, Legislative Aide to Assembly Chair Rivera
Phone: 907-317-3078
Email: judithjessen@gmail.com