

S U S A N

C O M B S

TEXAS COMPTROLLER *of* PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

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Dear Retailer:

As you know, our office works with businesses like yours and Texas law enforcement to prevent minors from purchasing cigarettes. Smoking is one of the biggest health risks our kids face, and we need your help to fight it.

Each year, about 32,000 Texans under the age of 18 pick up the daily smoking habit. And more than a half-million Texas minors smoking today can expect to die from the habit.

Smoking-related illness is a tragedy — and it has a profound effect on our finances as well. The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids estimates that each household in Texas already faces an annual state and federal tax bill of **\$586**, just to cover health care expenditures caused by smoking. And if we don't stop selling tobacco to our kids, we could lose millions of federal aid dollars earmarked for Texas.

With your assistance, we can work together to ensure thousands of Texas children lead longer, healthier lives. As a retailer, you stand on the front line of our battle against teen access to tobacco. Our retailer education campaign, "Under 18 — I Can't Sell, You Can't Buy," will give you and your employees the knowledge and skills needed to halt illegal sales to minors. This kit contains:

- warning signs — Texas law requires you to post this sign at the point of sale, where it is visible to the buyer and seller.
- warning stickers for use on vending machines.
- a "How to Check an ID" flyer that explains how you can tell at a glance if someone is a minor.
- a poster that illustrates the need for checking ID.
- a booklet that arms your employees with the skills they need to say "Under 18 — I Can't Sell, You Can't Buy" — and make it stick.
- register stickers that tell customers in advance that you will be asking for ID.
- a "Buying or Selling Tobacco Products" brochure summarizing the law.
- rules explaining penalties and warning sign requirements.

With your support, we can keep minors away from tobacco and build a better future for Texans of all ages.

Sincerely,

Susan Combs