

Bill would raise Calif. smoking age to 21

By Alexei Koseff, Sacramento Bee

In an effort to keep cigarettes out of the hands of teenagers, state Sen. Ed Hernandez, D-Azusa, announced legislation Thursday that would raise the legal smoking age in California from 18 to 21.

“Tobacco companies know that people are more likely to become addicted to smoking if they start at a young age” Hernandez said in a statement. “We can no longer afford to sit on the sidelines while big tobacco markets to our kids and gets another generation of young people hooked on a product that will ultimately kill them.”

Nine in ten smokers take up the habit by the age of 18, according to the American Lung Association in California, and 36,000 California kids start smoking each year.

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