

**Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs**

**03/04/2025 02:00 PM**

**SB25-139 Grocery & Utility Bill Reduction Measures**

**Typed Text of Testimony Submitted**

<b>Name, Position, Representing</b>	<b>Typed Text of Testimony</b>
Aldo Macias For themselves	Cost of living is very important. eliminating this will help. Let's focus on helping out Americans out. No need on extra fees.
Aldo Macias For themselves	There's absolutely no reason to be charging these fees at all!

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF:  
Jodi L. Radke  
Regional Director  
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

**IN OPPOSITION OF**  
SB 25-139  
BEFORE THE  
Senate State, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee

March 4, 2025

Chair Weissman, members of the State, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee,  
Good Afternoon. My name is Jodi Radke. I am the Regional Director at the  
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. I have worked with my organization for over  
18 years, and nearly 25 years, here in Colorado on tobacco control policy  
change.

The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids is the leading advocacy organization  
working to reduce tobacco use and its deadly consequences in the United States  
and around the world. Through strategic communications and policy advocacy  
campaigns, we promote the adoption of proven solutions that are most effective  
at reducing tobacco use and saving the most lives.

Despite enormous progress, tobacco use is still the leading cause of preventable  
death and disease in Colorado, and, in the United States. It kills more than 5,100  
Coloradoans each year, and costs Coloradoans \$2.19 billion in health care  
expenses each year.

95% of current adult, daily smokers began their use before the age of 21. 87%  
began before the age of 18. The average age of initiation with tobacco is  
between the ages of 12-14, when the experimentation physiologically hardwires  
the developing brain to make it more susceptible to addiction, for life. Nearly 90%  
of experimentation with tobacco is a result of the product's flavor. The tobacco  
industry spends over \$117 million each year to market their products in  
Colorado, at our expense.

Given tobacco industry spending in Colorado, a lack of both federal and state  
protective policies, and predacious marketing towards Colorado's kids, it is

critically important that our municipalities have the policy tools needed to deter use in their communities.

Based on a comprehensive review of evidence, the Surgeon General has called raising prices on cigarettes “one of the most effective tobacco control interventions” because increasing price is proven to reduce smoking, especially among kids. The cigarette companies have even publicly admitted the effectiveness of tax increases to deter smoking in their required filings with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

Numerous economic studies in peer-reviewed journals have documented that cigarette tax or price increases reduce both adult and underage smoking. The general consensus is that nationally, every 10 percent increase in the real price of cigarettes reduces adult smoking by about two percent, reduces smoking among young adults by about 3.5 percent, reduces the number of kids who smoke by six or seven percent, and reduces overall cigarette consumption by approximately three to five percent.

Increasing the price of tobacco is one of the most effective deterrents in decreasing use amongst kids.

The Colorado Legislature recognized this in 2019, and decidedly removed preemptive language in state law, that at one time disallowed municipalities from taxing tobacco, without incurring financial penalties. Since that time, over a dozen municipalities have successfully referred and passed ballot measures for voter approval to raise taxes.

SB 25-139 includes sweeping language that includes repealing municipal authority that permits voter approval to enact local taxes on tobacco and plays directly into the tobacco industry playbook.

Look no further than 1994. “By introducing pre-emptive statewide legislation, we can shift the battle away from the community level back to the state legislatures where we are on stronger ground.” —*Tina Walls, Philip Morris, July 8, 1994*

Colorado should be doing everything it can to work in collaboration with our municipalities to pass policies that prioritize and protect kids’ health, not deter it.

I urge you to oppose SB 25-139.