



## **MEDIA TIP /// MEDIA TIP /// MEDIA TIP /// MEDIA TIP**

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### **PASSAGE OF SENATE BILL 1256 VITAL TO THE HEALTH OF OKLAHOMA**

**Passage of Senate Bill 1256**, legislation concerning youth access to tobacco, is vital to Oklahoma's future.

Senate Bill 1256 – “Improving Compliance with Laws and Regulations on Tobacco Sales to Minors” – recently passed through the Senate with a unanimous vote of 44-0. The bill is set to be heard on the House Floor next week as the final step before being sent to the governor. Despite compelling reasons for its passage, there has been speculation the tobacco industry and a few lobbyists are mobilizing to defeat this bill.

The bill would strengthen compliance with laws concerning sales of tobacco to minors by assessing stricter penalties and other restrictions on stores that *repeatedly* sell tobacco products to those under age 18.

Presently, more than 40 percent of Oklahoma middle school students report using tobacco on a regular basis – not an encouraging statistic. Approximately 90 percent of adult smokers began smoking before age 18 and nearly 10,000 high school students become regular, daily smokers every year in Oklahoma – the equivalent of one classroom per day. Roughly one out of three of these young smokers will die early as a direct result of starting this deadly habit.

A state leader on children and youth is available for interview to discuss the devastating consequences non-passage of this bill would have on all of Oklahoma.

**WHO: Janice Hendryx**  
**Director, Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**, contact Debbie McCowan, Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth, **405-606-4913**.