

The Smoke-Free Schools Act of 2019

Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) & Senator Mitt Romney (R-UT)

The use of e-cigarettes, and other Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (“ENDS”) has increased at an alarming rate in schools and among today’s youth. From 2017-2018, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have recorded a nearly 48% increase in e-cigarette use among middle schoolers, and a nearly 78% increase in e-cigarette use among high schoolers. Specifically, 27.1% of high school students and 7.2% of middle school students used a tobacco product in 2018. In 2018 alone, 3,620,000 high schoolers and middle schoolers were classified as current users, which was an increase of 1,500,000 students in just one year.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have all played an instrumental role in studying the risks associated with e-cigarette and addressing measures to reduce e-cigarette usage among today’s kids. Numerous studies have confirmed health risks associated with nicotine use and addiction among youth. However, much work remains, especially in school settings, where e-cigarette use not only poses a health risk, but can be distracting for other students, difficult for teachers to detect, and result in a less healthy school environment.

Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) and **Senator Mitt Romney** (R-UT) plan to re-introduce the Smoke Free Schools Act to help school districts and local education agencies address the problem of e-cigarettes in schools. The bill outlines the extent of the e-cigarette epidemic through a comprehensive findings section and amends the Pro-Children Act of 2001 to explicitly include e-cigarettes in the smoking ban currently enacted in educational and childcare facilities.

The Smoke-Free Schools Summary

1) Findings:

- The bill establishes findings supporting the assertion that e-cigarette use has become a public health epidemic in schools and among youth. The findings discuss the substantial increases in youth smoking in the past few years, as well as the dangers of nicotine addiction for people under the age of 18.
- Highlights Congress’s policy-setting role in ensuring that the use of tobacco products among minors is discouraged to the maximum extent possible.

2) Prohibits e-cigarettes in schools:

- The bill updates the Pro-Children Act of 2001 to ensure that e-cigarettes and other ENDS and other tobacco products are included in smoking bans for educational and childcare facilities that receive federal funding.

Support

Endorsing organizations include: *National Association of Secondary School Principals (NAASSP), the School Superintendents Association (AASA), Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE), National PTA (PTA), National School Boards Association (NSBA), National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), American Lung Association (ALA), Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, & New Mexico PTA.*