

Council to vote in favor of raising tobacco-purchasing age to 21

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SAN ANTONIO — The San Antonio City Council is expected to raise the legal tobacco buying age to 21.

- **Metro Health survey found that 77.5% of San Antonio residents support the raising of the legal age to buy tobacco product**

The Alamo City seems to be leading the pack on this issue — if the 11-member council raise the legal tobacco buying age from 18 to 21, San Antonio will be the first city in the Lone Star State to do so.

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Right now, there are some 260 municipalities nationwide which are on the same trend, according to Tobacco Free Kids, an anti-tobacco organization. If passed, the city ordinance will prevent retailers from selling tobacco products to people under 21.

Advocates for the progressive measure say this is all about health.

They argue that using tobacco come with a high premium — About \$300 billion yearly is lost to worker productivity and health care. Retailers say, this is about their bottom line if passed.

"According to national colleagues, we are going to lose 4 percent business. 4 percent means, if I have a million dollar sale that's going to cost me \$40,000 a year," said Anwar Tahir, president of the Association of Convenience Store Retailers.

The City Council will vote Thursday and if passed, it will go into effect Aug. 1.