

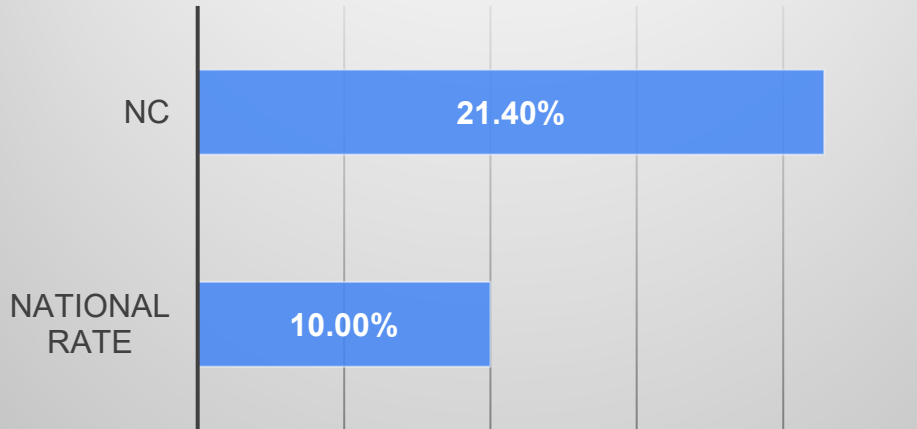
# Tobacco 21 Coalition

## Working to protect NC youth from harms of vaping and nicotine addiction



April 2026

## NC high school student e-cigarette use rate is more than double the national rate



Sources: [National rate, 2023 National Youth Tobacco Survey](#)

[NC rate, 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) NC Department of Public Instruction

# NC is 6<sup>th</sup> highest in nation in youth vaping

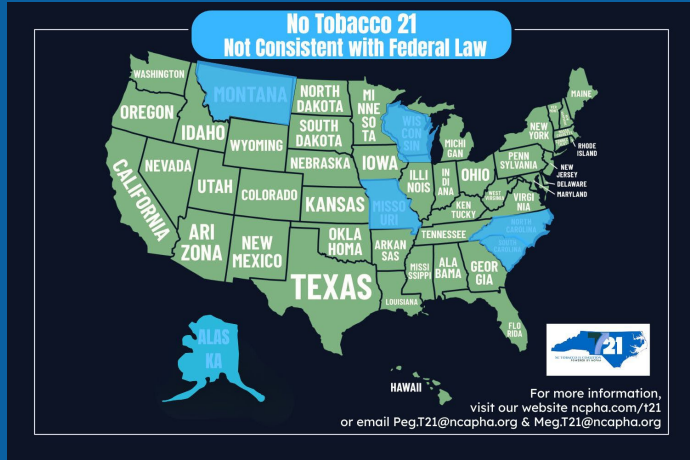
Highest	% of High School Students Vaping
1. West Virginia	27 %
2. Montana	24.3 %
3. Arkansas	23%
4. Oklahoma	21.8 %
5. Tennessee	21.6 %
6. North Carolina	21.4 %

Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey, CDC 2023

# National update on T21 and TRL Laws

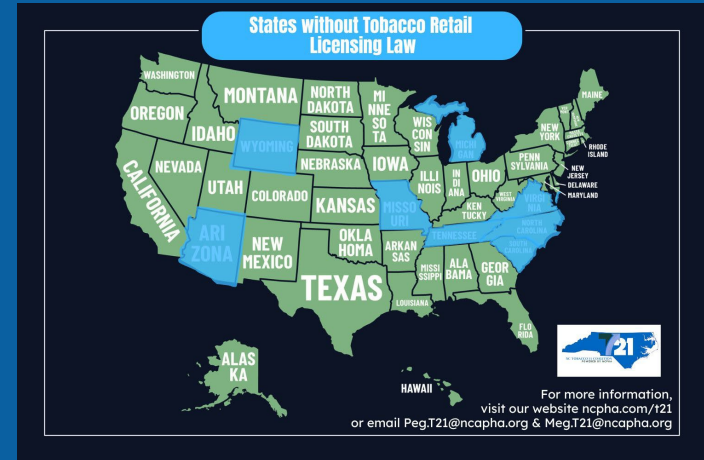
## 44 states have raised the tobacco sales age to 21

- *Arizona passed law Sept 26, 2025*
- **NC is one of 6** states that has not raised the minimum legal sales age to 21: Alaska, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Wisconsin

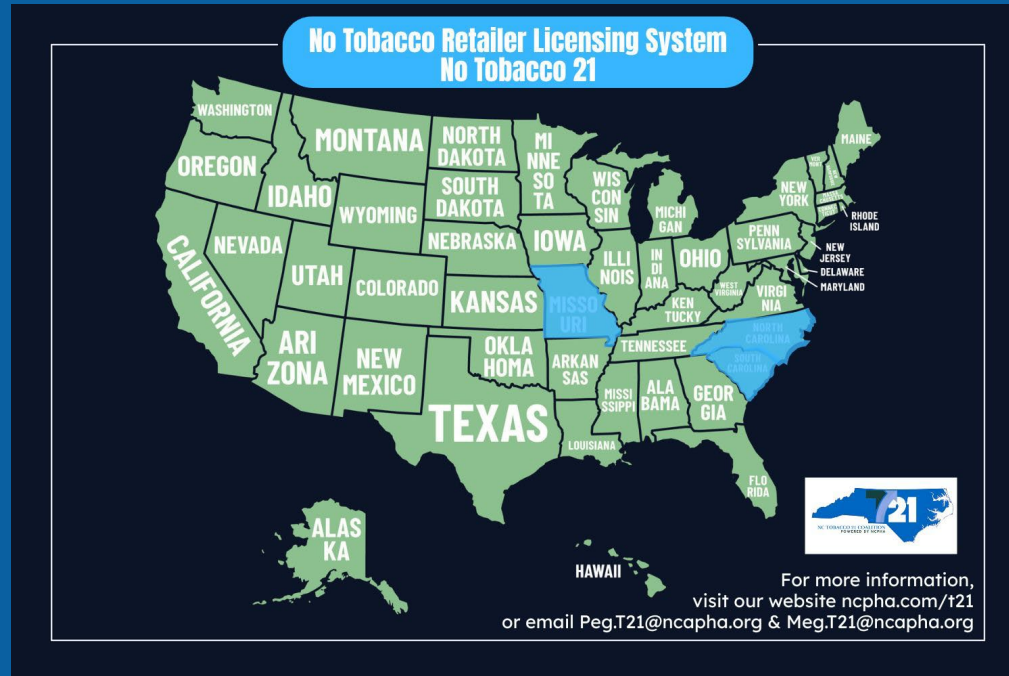


## 42 states have passed tobacco retail licensing

- *Kentucky passed law March 10, 2025*
- *SD Governor Larry Rhoden signed TRL law March 30, 2026.*
- **NC is one of 8** states without tobacco retail licensing: Arizona, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and Wyoming



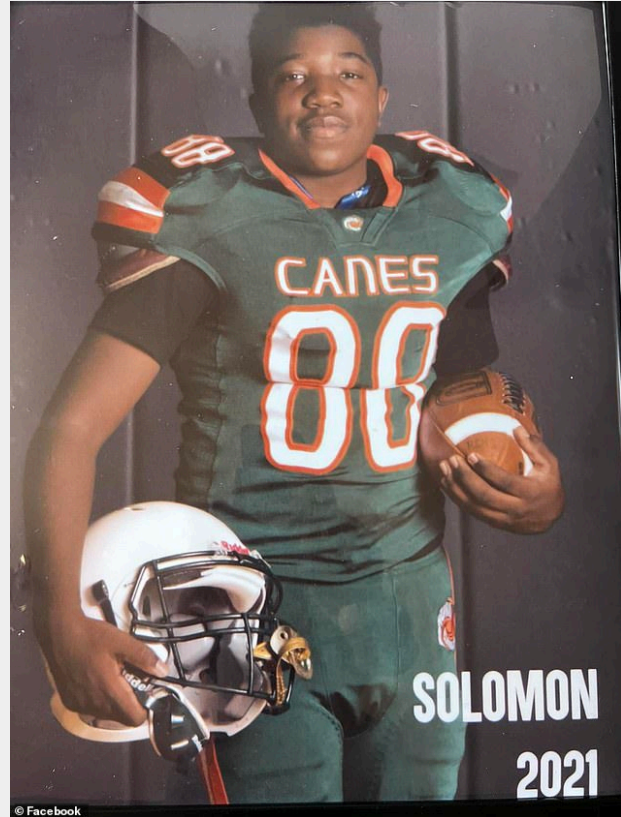
# 3 states lack both T21 and TRL laws: Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina



# Vaping has serious consequences

Tragic death just months after a  
vape-induced cough

X-ray showed lung damage caused  
by vaping



15-year-old “Solly”  
Solomon Wynn from Wilmington

The NC Tobacco 21 Coalition honors

# Solomon Isaiah Wynn

by advocating for Solly's Law to protect youth from vaping and nicotine.



Though you are not here to walk across the stage,  
you will always be part of the Class of 2026 and forever in our hearts.

# Nicotine is highly addictive

A vape pod can contain **40-90** times nicotine in a cigarette



Youth  
Vaping  
According  
to the 2023  
NC Youth  
Risk  
Behavior  
Survey

**37% of NC high school kids have tried a VAPE product**

Among 12<sup>th</sup> graders, it is 50%

More than **one in five** NC high school kids report **current** use of VAPE products;  
For 12<sup>th</sup> graders it's one in three

One in ten NC **middle schoolers** reports current use of VAPE products

# Impact of Vaping on Adolescent Brain Development

Dr. Tobi Gilbert



# Nicotine and the Developing Brain

**Nicotine** is highly addictive and can have significant effects on the brain.

The adolescent brain is still developing until around age 25, making it more vulnerable to nicotine's effects.

## Cognitive Impairments

Nicotine can interfere with attention, learning, and memory.

Studies have shown that nicotine exposure during adolescence can lead to long-term cognitive deficits.

## Emotional and Behavioral Effects

Nicotine use can increase anxiety, mood swings, and irritability.

These effects can be particularly detrimental during adolescence, a critical period for emotional and social development.

# Unregulated “wild wild west”

- It is very easy for kids to get vapes from retail locations such as gas stations & vape shops.
- The #1 way youth get vapes is from a local retailer
- The #2 way is from a peer who got it from a local retailer



# Vaping disrupts education environment

- Vaping is everywhere in schools; even elementary
- Youth report it is *hard to get through the school day without vaping*:  
25% High School, 33% Middle School
- Youth report they *have tried to quit vaping*:  
64% High School, 68% Middle School



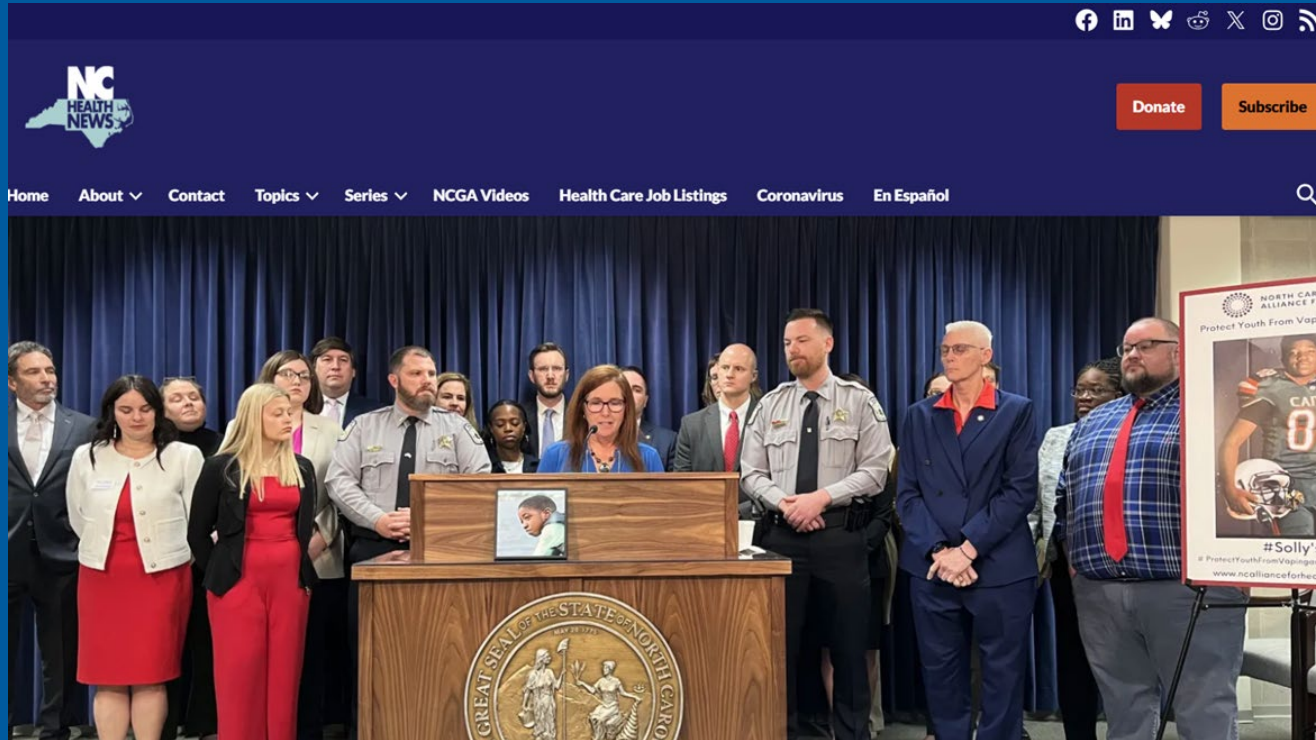
# Solly's Law will fill gaps in NC law

- Raise the legal age for sale of tobacco products in NC from 18 to 21 to align with federal law (2019 Congress passed law to raise federal sales age to 21)
- Establish a license for tobacco retailers, which will allow law enforcement to hold predatory sellers accountable
- NC is one of 6 states that has not raised the age
- NC is one of 8 states that does not require a license to sell vapes and tobacco

# Current law punishes groups that the industry targets

- Current NC law, when youth under 18 purchase tobacco, the charge is a Class 2 misdemeanor.
- This stays on their record & may interfere with educational or employment opportunities.
- With Solly's Law, youth penalties will be decriminalized.
- Underage purchaser will no longer receive a Class 2 misdemeanor, it will be an infraction with no fines, no community service, they will get referral to DHHS for education and treatment/quit coaching.

# Press Conference to introduce H430 S318 “Solly’s Law” to Protect Youth from Harms of Vaping and Nicotine March 19, 2025





CAROL  
88

SOLOMON  
2021

#Solly'sLaw

#FreeYouFromVapingandNicotine #Tobacco21

[www.allianceforhealth.org/tobacco21](http://www.allianceforhealth.org/tobacco21)



House Bill 430 (=S318)		H431
outine.		
	<b>Last Action:</b>	Ref to the Com on Judiciary 1, if favorable, Finance, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House on 3/19/2025
	<b>Sponsors:</b>	Loftis; Campbell; Ross; Willis (Primary) Almond; Ball; Biggs; Branson; G. Brown; Buansi; Budd; Carney; Cervania; Cotham; Davis; Greenfield; N. Jackson; Johnson-Hostler; Logan; Longest; Majeed; G. Pierce; Pike; Reeder; Rubin; Scott; Ward; White
	<b>Attributes:</b>	Public

Primary Sponsors H430:  
 Representative Donnie Loftis  
 Representative Grant Campbell, MD  
 Representative Stephen Ross  
 Representative David Willis

Primary Sponsor S318:  
 Senator Gale Adcock

## Mourning mother, NC lawmakers push to raise age to buy tobacco products to 21

The bipartisan effort would also require a tobacco retail sales permit for stores selling vapes and tobacco products.

Posted 6:33 PM Mar 18, 2025 – Updated 6:22 PM yesterday



## June 3, 2025 Media Conference

18 Youth from:

- East Duplin High School
- Eastern Alamance High School
- Wake County:
  - Poe Center for Health Education
  - American Heart Association Clubs
  - Apex Friendship High School



# 156 Resolutions

## Strong Community Support for Solly's Law

County Commissioners

Public Health Boards

School Boards

Foundations

NC Healthcare Association

Sheriff's Offices

Police Departments

Substance Prevention & Treatment

Youth Organizations

Community Organizations

Visit NCPHA website  
<https://ncpha.com/t21/>

- One pager on bill
- Subscribe to T21 e-newsletter
- Join T21 Coalition zoom meetings
- Bring resolution to your Board



Nanaki Painth, T21 Youth Council member, and Representative Loftis,  
NC Child Conference, Raleigh, April 2026



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