

ASU's smoking ban is necessary to protect young adults from harmful effects

ASU recently passed an on-campus smoking ban for all four campuses scheduled to begin next school year.

Students for Liberty, an ASU group, has collected more than 10,000 signatures protesting the ban. To entice more followers to join the cause, they offered free cigarettes.

Is ASU violating our civil liberties? I think not.

Like most young adults, the Students for Liberty believe they will live forever. "No need to quit smoking now," they may say. "We have plenty of time to kick the habit" or "I'll never get cancer" and "I'm too young to get lung (mouth, and tongue) cancer."

The effects of long-term tobacco use may show up later in life: yellowing teeth, foul breath and limited lung capacity resulting in the need to carry a small oxygen tank because of emphysema.

What about everyone else's right to avoid inhaling secondhand smoke? People suffering from asthma, COPD, cystic fibrosis, and allergies should



My Turn

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personal space.

We can agree that smoking represents an addiction to nicotine.

Tobacco products must be treated the same as alcohol, barbiturates, heroin, crystal methamphetamine and bath salts.

The revised Arizona 2011 statute of the Title 13 Criminal Code Arizona 13-3622 imposes monetary sanctions for anyone who provides tobacco to minors (under age 18), including supermarkets, convenience stores, gas stations and wherever smoking materials are sold.

These statutes are only effective as the enforcers.

have rights, too.

In 2010, the ASU student senate lost its fight to ban smoking on campus. Instead, it settled for designated smoking areas.

Still, the billowing plumes and ash resulting from burning cigarettes often waft into the non-smokers' personal space.

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Since 2002, the Arizona Attorney General's Office has worked with the Arizona Department of Health Services to create and sustain the Counter Strike program.

Together, young volunteers and special investigators from the Attorney General's Office try to buy tobacco products from retailers.

If the proprietor sells smoking materials to the volunteer, they may receive a citation and have to pay fines from \$300 up to \$1,000 per (petty) offense.

The state Department of Health Services may revisit businesses that failed to obey the law and provide opportunities to educate them.

If the retailer does not sell these products to the volunteer, they are commended for their efforts to keep tobacco from kids.

Signs posted in retail establishments require citizens 40 and under to provide a driver's license or other identification to prove their age.

Is Arizona turning into a police state?

It may seem like it, especially during the Christmas holidays, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, the Fourth of July, and Memorial Day weekend. That's because we must be protected against drunken drivers and red-light runners.

The same should be true for smokers, although the long-term effects may not be seen for years as opposed to instant results of drinking and driving: injured and dead victims.

We need to help our young adults to make responsible choices.

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