

FACTS ON PREMIUM CIGARS AND YOUTH TOBACCO ACCESS



Cigar Rights of America (CRA) and the Premium Cigar Association (PCA) strongly support efforts to prevent the use of tobacco products by America's youth. As Congress works to address issues of adolescent tobacco consumption and nicotine addiction highlighted by vaping and e-cigarettes, we caution legislators take care not to harm industries that are proven not to be part of the problem.

- The vast majority of the thousands of premium cigar retail stores across the country are small businesses, most of which are managed by their owners, and of which 75% are single store owners. These retailers take great pride in their history of **compliance with age verification laws**, which is confirmed by undercover inspection data published by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Additionally, associations in the cigar industry are taking proactive steps to provide information and guidance on age verification best practices to retail members.
- Under the guise of a widespread tobacco epidemic, the goal posts keep moving to create a regulatory framework that would make it **impossible for many small business retailers and manufacturers to operate**, even if they are not part of the youth access issues. The current debate on tobacco policy shouldn't be an open invitation to layer on new requirements for all tobacco product types like premium cigars that are not marketed or used by youth. Policymakers should consider retail jobs and small businesses in the premium cigar industry, as well as the pertinent health factors based on product type, when developing new enactments.
- Unequivocally, **premium cigars are not part of this youth access issue**. A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 2017 confirmed that **youth do not smoke premium cigars**. This analysis of the 2013–14 PATH data found no statistically significant use of “traditional cigars” by minors on a “daily” or “frequent” basis. The study defined “traditional cigars” as “tightly rolled tobacco that is wrapped in a tobacco leaf. Some common brands of cigars include Macanudo, Romeo y Julieta, and Arturo Fuente, but there are many others.”¹
- FDA's own research has shown that **premium cigars are consumed infrequently, not daily as addictive nicotine products are shown to be consumed**. Published in the Oxford University Press, after analyzing the 2013–14 PATH data, the authors concluded, “[T]he results illustrate clear distinctions between premium and non-premium [cigar] smoker characteristics, use patterns and purchasing behaviors.”² Furthermore, the study found the median age of first premium cigar use is 24.5 years of age and the median consumer smokes one day out of every thirty.
- The CRA and PCA are concerned that a focus by the FDA implementing a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to all tobacco products will detract from efforts to address the significant problem of youth tobacco product consumption. Effective tobacco policy should be rooted in research, laser-focused to address real problems. It should also ensure that unintended consequences from bad policy don't destroy small businesses, jobs, a major tax base and consumer interests. The premium cigar industry directly supports 30,000 domestic jobs and 120,000 ancillary jobs.

¹ Karin A Kasza et al., *Tobacco Product Use by Adults and Youths in the United States in 2013 and 2014*, 376 *NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF MEDICINE* 342–353, at Supp. Appx. Table S4 (Jan. 26, 2017).

² Catherine G. Corey et al., *US Adult Cigar Smoking Patterns, Purchasing Behaviors, and Reasons for Use According to Cigar Type: Findings From the Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health (PATH) Study, 2013–2014*, *NICOTINE & TOBACCO RESEARCH*, at 7 (Sep. 15, 2017)