

Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5164 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF FUNDS IN THE TOBACCO

Title: SETTLEMENT FUND.

Vote Date: 3/2/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/18/2026

File No.: 21

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Public Health Committee.

REASONS FOR BILL:

As recommended by the best practices of the Center for Disease Control (CDC), this bill increases from \$12 million to \$32 million, the amount of money from the proceeds of the Tobacco Settlement Fund that are to be directly distributed to the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund rather than the General Fund. The board of the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund then recommends annual disbursements to specific programs designed to reduce the use of tobacco and nicotine products with a focus on prevention, education and cessation. The Trust Fund recommendations are submitted to the Appropriations and Public Health committees for approval.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

Addresses a technical change to a date referenced in the bill.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Ruth Canovi, Director of Advocacy for the American Lung Association:

The Association supports any increases in investment for programs preventing young people from getting addicted to nicotine, and helping individuals already addicted to quit. These programs save lives and money. Having this money appropriated directly to the Tobacco and

Health Trust Fund rather than the General Fund ensures this money will be spent on the programs it was meant to foster.

Bryte Johnson, CT Government Relations Director, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN):

ACS CAN strongly supports increasing tobacco control funding to \$32 million to meet the CDC's best practices recommendations. The increase in funding would better alleviate and reduce the staggering annual economic toll tobacco use costs our state. After years of decline, we have seen sharp increases nationwide in youth tobacco use largely due to the use of e-cigarettes. Unfortunately, many young people who use tobacco do not identify the type they use as a tobacco product, nor do they identify the product as harmful. Evidence suggests that enhanced marketing efforts contributes to the increased use of e-cigarettes making them more deadly than ever. Following the CDC's recommendations for tobacco control programs provides states with the ability to educate people on the dangers of smoking and for those already addicted, resources to help them quit.

Ingrid Gillespie, Director of Prevention at Liberation Programs INC. and a member of Mobilize Against Tobacco for Connecticut's Health (MATCH):

Ms. Gillespie points out that prevention and cessation efforts require consistent funding and are essential to reducing the long-term impact of tobacco and related products on the health and economic well-being of the people in our state.

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA):

In the past, Connecticut has not adequately funded, "and at times not funded at all", programs focused on tobacco use prevention and cessation. This increased funding going directly to the Tobacco and Health Fund will go a long way to ensure programs and services meant to reduce the impact of tobacco and tobacco products are provided in communities throughout our state.

Jim Williams, Government Relations Director for the American Heart Association in CT:

Unfortunately, Connecticut has traditionally struggled to fund programs and services targeted to the cessation, prevention and education regarding the impact of tobacco and tobacco products use in our state. Tobacco control programs have been shown to be effective in reducing the prevalence of smoking. Increased funding going directly to the Tobacco and Health Fund would strengthen the effort to reverse the trend we have experienced in the past.

Kirsten Chery, a Public Health student at Southern Connecticut State University:

Ms. Chery is employed as a Tobacco Health Educator in middle and high schools. Through personal interaction with her students, Ms. Chery has experienced first-hand the impact of vaping, nicotine addiction and experimentation among her students. Recently, she spoke with six different high school classes and asked each class whether they believed vaping is an issue in their school. Without hesitation, all the classes responded yes. What stands out most from her interactions with students is how unaware they are about the dangers of these products and the long-term effects they can have on an individual. At the end of each session, the students complete surveys. The majority report that they have learned something new that makes them less likely to use nicotine products. During these

discussions, students are attentive, engaged and ask questions. Ms. Chery supports education on these issues as key to reducing smoking among our youth.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Kathleen Panazza

Date: March 3, 2026