

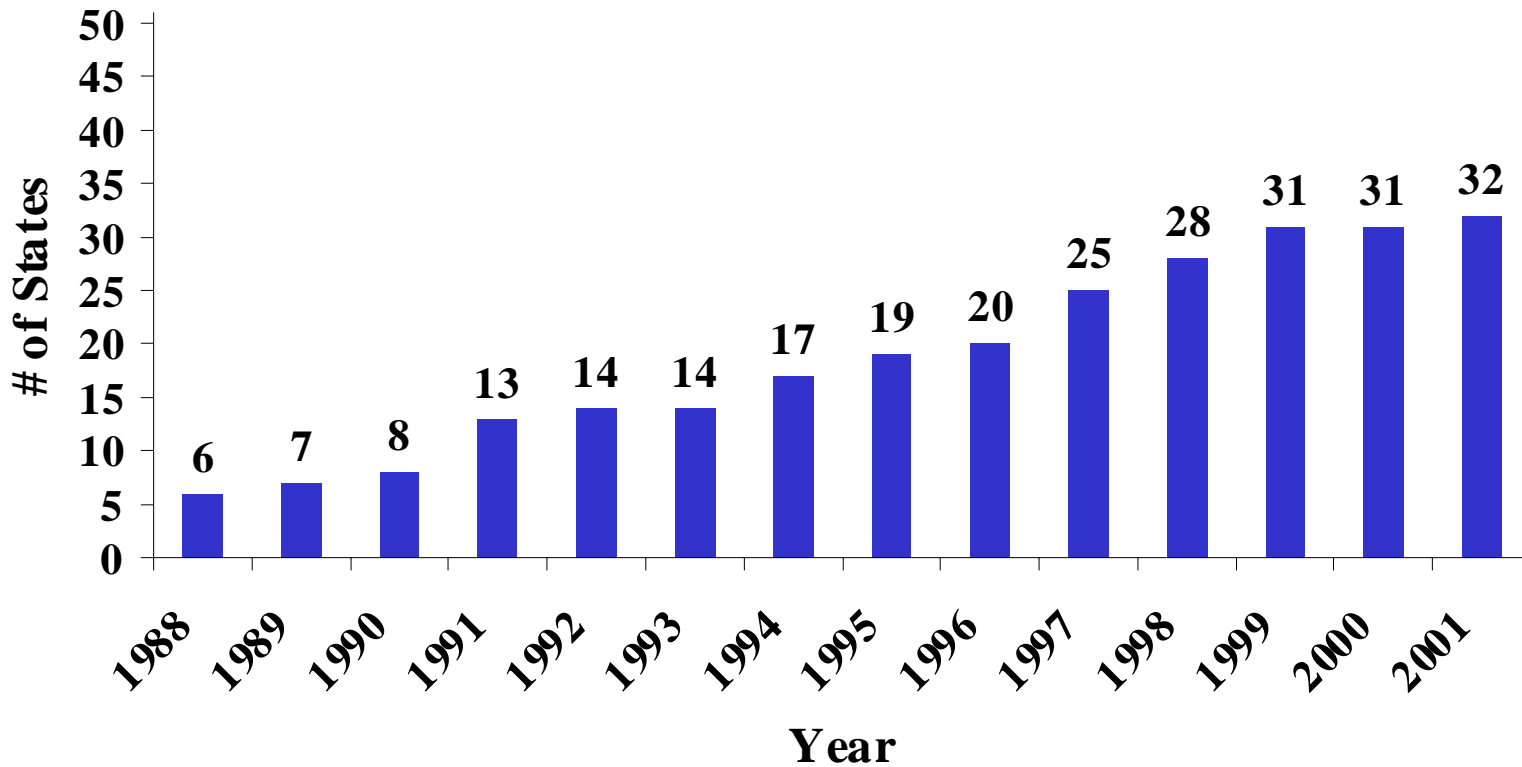
# Teen Penalties for Tobacco Possession, Use and Purchase: Evidence and Issues

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# US States\* with legislation restricting possession of cigarettes to persons aged $\geq 18$ years



\* Includes the District of Columbia

Source: "State Legislated Actions On Tobacco Issues", 1988-2001, CDC's STATE system, Roswell Park Cancer Institute.



## Psychological perspectives on punishment

- Response-contingent application of an unpleasant or aversive event in an attempt to suppress or prevent recurrence of unwanted response
- specific deterrent effect: influence behavior of offender being punished
- general deterrent effects: influence behavior of other potential offenders



## Psychological perspectives on punishment

- Potential offender perceives high likelihood that detection and punishment will result
- Punisher has a close affectionate relationship with offender
- Unintended effects of punishment:
  - recipient takes more care to avoid detection
  - others conspire to protect offender
  - pursuit of avoidance may promote sense of belonging to social out-group, leading to increased offending
  - may elicit defiance



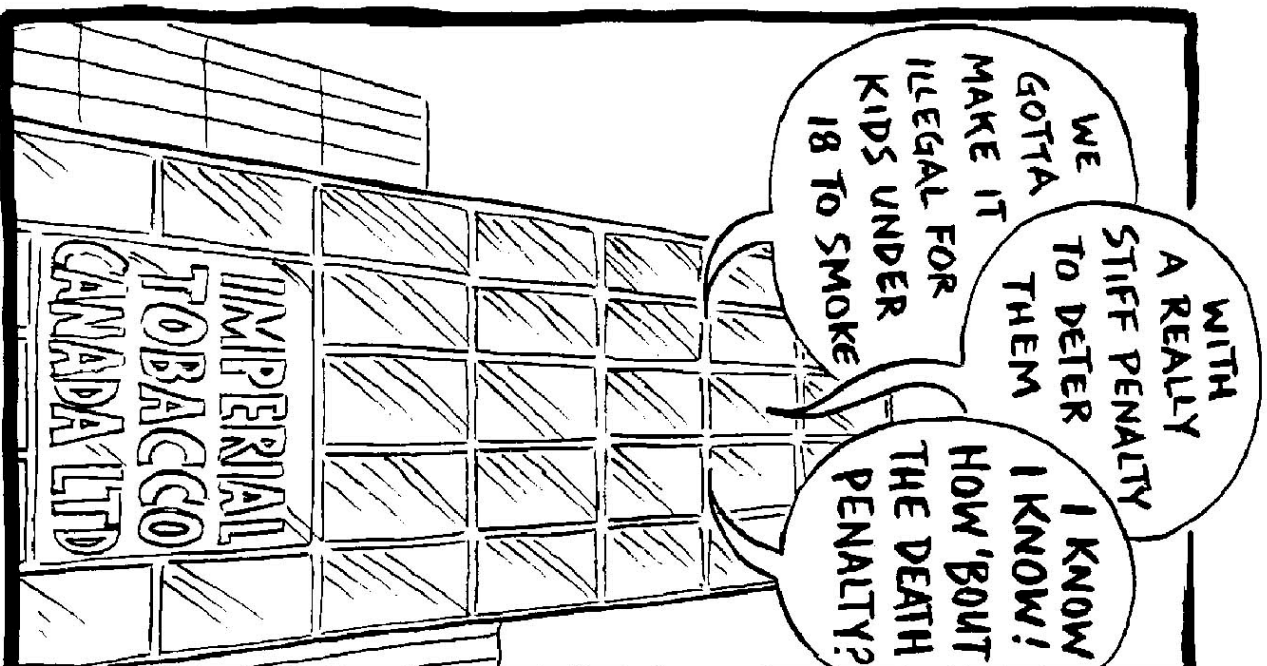
## Effects of PUP laws on teen smoking

- Studies of youth who attend diversion programs (specific effects)
  - Lazovitch et al (Minnesota)
  - Langer et al (Florida)
- Studies of youth populations subject to PUP laws (general effects)
  - Livingood et al (Florida)
  - Giovino et al (contiguous USA)



## Effects of PUP laws on other tobacco control strategies

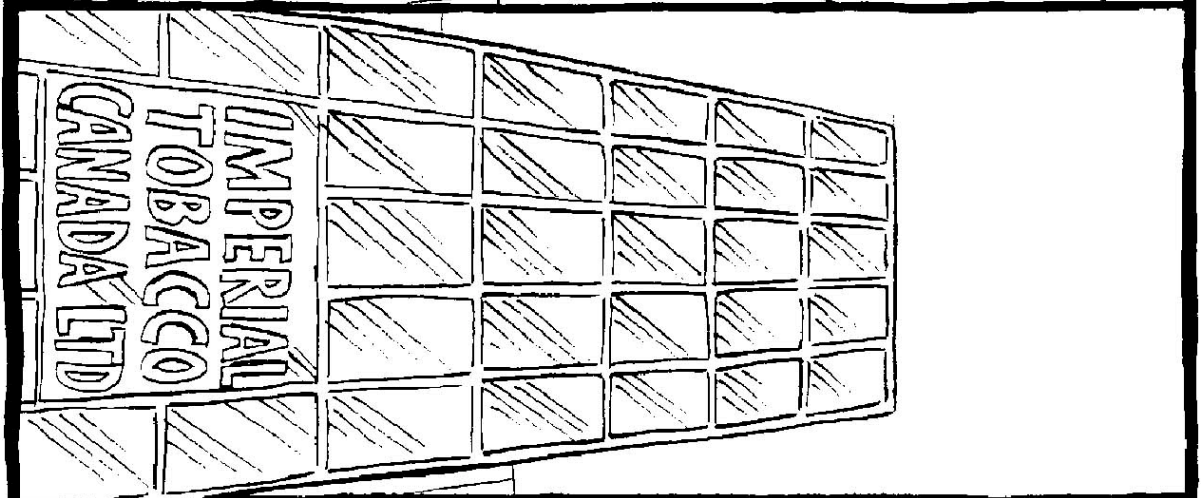
- Retailer compliance with sales to minors laws
- Parental controls
- School policies
- Other tobacco control policies, such as taxation and smoke-free laws
- Tobacco industry profile
  - good fit with industry efforts to portray smoking as an ‘adult’ behavior
  - helped companies gain an entrée into minds of policy-makers



WE GOTTA MAKE IT ILLEGAL FOR KIDS UNDER 18 TO SMOKE

WITH A REALLY STIFF PENALTY TO DETER THEM

I KNOW I KNOW! HOW 'BOUT THE DEATH PENALTY?



NAH, FORGET IT. WE ALREADY HAVE THAT ONE...



## Main conclusions

- Difficult to conclude strong positive effects of PUP laws on youth smoking, but there may be *some* effects, both specific and general
- Theoretical, practical and strategic reasons why PUP laws may be unlikely to significantly reduce youth smoking
- Potential for PUP laws to undermine other tobacco strategies, but also potential for reinforcement
- PUP laws are common, so difficult and probably unnecessary to oppose them





## Research questions

- What are specific effects of PUP laws that offer different types of educational or community service penalties vs fines?
- To what extent are laws (or can laws be) enforced to a level where general deterrent effects may be measurable?
- How do youth perceive PUP laws?



## Research questions (cont'd)

- Under what circumstances might PUP laws be associated with stronger or weaker school and parental controls on smoking?
- To what extent, if any, have PUP laws diverted attention from more effective tobacco control strategies?