

STATE SENATOR • TUPAC A. HUNTER • 5TH DISTRICT

Hunter Press Release

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SENATE PASSES HUNTER BILLS TO HELP PREVENT FIRES CAUSED BY CIGARETTES

Legislation allows only slow-burn cigarettes in Michigan, creates fund for fire safety programs

LANSING- State Senator Tupac A. Hunter said today that passage of his bill requiring cigarette manufacturers to meet certain fire-safety standards will help in the fight to prevent fires caused by burning cigarettes.

“Manufacturers have the capacity to make cigarettes that burn more slowly when left unattended,” said Sen. Hunter. “I am pleased that my Senate colleagues have joined me and passed these bills requiring that only fire safe slow burn cigarettes be sold in Michigan to help better protect our families and homes.”

Senate Bills 1620 and 1621 would require testing the fire-safety of tobacco products sold in Michigan. Products that meet these standards would then be designated as fire safe. Currently, 37 other states have fire-safe tobacco laws. The purpose of these laws is to decrease cigarette-related fires by requiring that cigarettes be designed to not stay lit if they are not being drawn upon.

The legislation creates a fine of not more than \$100 per pack if a manufacturer, wholesaler dealer or agent sells or offers to sell cigarettes in violation of this requirement. Any fines collected would be deposited into The Cigarette Fire Safety Standard and Firefighter Protection Act Fund that would be created in the Michigan Department of Treasury. This money may only be used to support fire safety and prevention programs.

The U.S. Fire Administration, within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, says that at least 1,000 smokers and non-smokers die every year in home fires caused by cigarettes and other smoking materials. Of that number, one in four who died in home fires were not the smoker whose cigarette caused the fire, and one third of those who died were children. The administration encourages smokers to use slow burn cigarettes.

“We’ve all heard stories of a fire caused by a lit cigarette being left in an ash tray, or a burning cigarette falling out of someone’s hand and setting fire to a carpet or bed,” said Sen. Hunter. “Now that the Senate has approved my bills, Michigan is closer to joining the majority of states that only sell these safer cigarettes. I look forward to quick

approval of my bills in the House of Representatives.”

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Sen. Hunter represents the 5th district, which is comprised of northwest Detroit, Dearborn and Inkster. He serves as Minority Vice Chair of the Banking & Financial Institutions and the Homeland Security & Emerging Technologies Committees. He is also a member of the Commerce & Tourism and the Economic Development & Regulatory Reform Committees.