

The United Kingdom. UK No smoking ever for Gen Alpha born after 2008. Not content merely to bar smoking from public places or tax tobacco to death, Parliament has now passed an outright ban on cigarette purchases for anyone born after 2008. This applies to anyone younger than the kids who are turning 18 this year. The House of Lords pushed this law through the Commons with some stating that they have just created the first smoke free generation in Britain. This law may even punish smokers who want to quit, by giving the health secretary powers to regulate vaping, including banning the practice from restaurants and offices.

Other European countries like Germany and the Netherlands are already looking to the British example. The British Parliament cited public health when it drafted the bill, noting that smoking kills Sixty Four Thousand Britons a year and cost the National Health Service up to Four Billion Dollars a year. These figures are even worse for Germany where more than One hundred thirty thousand people a year die from smoking. Could the radical measure of Britain also be an idea for Germany? Let us hope it catches on widely said a writer from the Netherlands. By merely imposing sin taxes we have been implicitly accepting the existence of a legal product that sickens and kills. Yet our youth do not even want to smoke. Eighty percent of Dutch young people support a total cigarette ban. The UK lifetime ban shows it is possible to take decisive action that will both prevent a deadly addiction and save significant amounts of money on public health spending. What are we waiting for?

The argument against banning cigarettes forever in the UK for those under 18 now goes something like this. Not since the cigar of Winston Churchill, who died Sixty years ago, has a smoking politician been so identified by his habit as Nigel Farage the far right wing UK Reform Party leader. Even though he is quite wealthy, he has managed to portray himself as a regular joe because he makes sure he is seen with a pint in one hand and cigarette in the other. By coming down so hard on smoking, the government has made both Labour, the party currently in power, and the Conservatives, the party that first drafted the bill back when Rishi Sunak was prime minister, look like killjoys. Only Reform gets to be the party of a good time. And, using the example of Australia, the ban will not even stop the kids from smoking, said two British writers in the Daily Mirror. It will simply create a booming black market. In Australia, where outrageous sin taxes pushed cigarettes to Forty Dollars a pack, rival gangs fight for cigarette dealing turf, and firebomb tobacco shops. The Prohibition era in the US is another cautionary tale. You ban something, you create gangsters who are willing to supply it illegally. Smoking may go down a bit, yes, but crime will go up.

The editor of RAWSEP thinks a solution to the problem of Indoor Residential Wood Burning PM two point five air pollution and its negative effect on the health and lives of near neighbors might be a simple ban on indoor residential wood burning. Would that be viewed as a sin tax on a hobby that is possibly psychologically addicting although not physically addicting as tobacco is? Is it not more fun to breathe freely in your own home rather than gasp for air? Is it not more fun to live a long and healthy life if you can? If there is a total ban will anyone be surprised to find that, say, Eighty percent of young people in the US support a total indoor residential wood burning ban? Twelve step programs to deal with breaking addiction to nicotine in cigarettes like addiction to alcohol would not be needed to break free of indoor residential wood burning.