87R8517 SRA-D

By:  Coleman H.B. No. 3842

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the prohibited sale of flavored cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and tobacco products and administrative penalties for the prohibited sales.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Section 161.081(1-a), Health and Safety Code, is amended to read as follows:

(1-a)  "E-cigarette" means an electronic cigarette or any other device that simulates smoking by using a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit to deliver nicotine or other substances to the individual inhaling from the device or a consumable liquid solution or other material aerosolized or vaporized during the use of an electronic cigarette or other device described by this subdivision, regardless of whether the liquid or other material contains nicotine. The term does not include a prescription medical device unrelated to the cessation of smoking. The term includes:

(A)  a device described by this subdivision regardless of whether the device is manufactured, distributed, or sold as an e-cigarette, e-cigar, or e-pipe or under another product name or description; and

(B)  a component, part, or accessory for the device, regardless of whether the component, part, or accessory is sold separately from the device.

SECTION 2.  Section 161.083(d), Health and Safety Code, is amended to read as follows:

(d)  Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a violation of this section is not a violation of this subchapter for purposes of Section 161.0901 [~~154.1142 or 155.0592, Tax Code~~].

SECTION 3.  Subchapter H, Chapter 161, Health and Safety Code, is amended by adding Section 161.0901 to read as follows:

Sec. 161.0901.  DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST CIGARETTE AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS RETAILERS. (a) A retailer is subject to disciplinary action as provided by this section if an agent or employee of the retailer commits an offense under this subchapter, Subchapter I, or Subchapter K.

(b)  If the comptroller finds, after notice and an opportunity for a hearing as provided by Chapter 2001, Government Code, that a permit holder violated this subchapter, Subchapter I, or Subchapter K at a place of business for which a permit is issued, the comptroller may suspend the permit for that place of business and assess an administrative penalty as follows:

(1)  for a permit holder who has not been found to have violated this subchapter, Subchapter I, or Subchapter K at that place of business during the 24-month period preceding the violation, the comptroller may impose on the permit holder a fine in an amount not to exceed $1,000;

(2)  for a permit holder who has been found to have violated this subchapter, Subchapter I, or Subchapter K at that place of business once during the 24-month period preceding the violation, the comptroller may impose on the permit holder a fine in an amount not to exceed $2,000; and

(3)  for a permit holder who has been found to have violated this subchapter, Subchapter I, or Subchapter K at that place of business at least twice during the 24-month period preceding the violation, the comptroller may:

(A)  impose on the permit holder a fine in an amount not to exceed $3,000; and

(B)  suspend the permit for that place of business for not more than five days.

(c)  Except as provided by Subsection (e), if the permit holder has been found to have violated this subchapter, Subchapter I, or Subchapter K on four or more previous and separate occasions at the same place of business during the 24-month period preceding the violation, the comptroller shall revoke the permit issued under Chapter 154 or 155, Tax Code, as applicable. If the permit holder does not hold a permit under Chapter 154 or 155, Tax Code, the comptroller shall revoke the permit issued under Section 151.201, Tax Code.

(d)  A permit holder whose permit has been revoked under this section may not apply for a permit for the same place of business before the expiration of six months after the effective date of the revocation.

(e)  For purposes of this section, the comptroller may suspend a permit but may not revoke the permit under Subsection (c) if the comptroller finds that:

(1)  the employer has violated this subchapter, Subchapter I, or Subchapter K seven or fewer times at the place of business for which the permit is issued in the 48-month period preceding the violation in question;

(2)  the employer requires its employees to attend a comptroller-approved seller training program;

(3)  the employees successfully complete the comptroller-approved seller training program; and

(4)  the employer has not directly or indirectly encouraged the employees to violate the law.

(f)  The comptroller may adopt rules to implement this section.

SECTION 4.  Chapter 161, Health and Safety Code, is amended by adding Subchapter I to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER I. FLAVORED CIGARETTES, E-CIGARETTES, AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Sec. 161.095.  DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1)  "Cigarette" has the meaning assigned by Section 154.001, Tax Code.

(2)  "E-cigarette" has the meaning assigned by Section 161.081.

(3)  "Tobacco product" has the meaning assigned by Section 155.001, Tax Code.

Sec. 161.096.  SALE OF FLAVORED CIGARETTES, E-CIGARETTES, OR TOBACCO PRODUCTS PROHIBITED. (a) A person may not sell, give, or cause to be sold or given a cigarette, e-cigarette, or tobacco product with a distinguishable taste or aroma other than the taste or aroma of tobacco, including the aroma or taste of:

(1)  an alcoholic beverage;

(2)  candy or dessert;

(3)  chocolate, cocoa, or vanilla;

(4)  fruit;

(5)  an herb or spice;

(6)  honey;

(7)  menthol; or

(8)  mint or wintergreen.

(b)  There is a rebuttable presumption that a cigarette, e-cigarette, or tobacco product has a distinguishable taste or aroma prohibited under Subsection (a) if a person:

(1)  makes a public statement or claim that the cigarette, e-cigarette, or tobacco product imparts a taste or smell other than the taste or smell of tobacco;

(2)  uses text or images on the labeling or packaging of the cigarette, e-cigarette, or tobacco product to indicate the product imparts a taste or smell other than the taste or smell of tobacco; or

(3)  takes other action directed at consumers that would reasonably be expected to cause consumers to believe the cigarette, e-cigarette, or tobacco product imparts a taste or smell other than the taste or smell of tobacco.

SECTION 5.  The following provisions of the Tax Code are repealed:

(1)  Section 154.1142;

(2)  Section 154.1143;

(3)  Section 155.0592; and

(4)  Section 155.0593.

SECTION 6.  Section 161.0901, Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act, applies only to a violation that occurs on or after the effective date of this Act. A violation that occurs before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on the date the violation occurred, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 7.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.