

## **In Support Of House Bill 2639, Bob Ramstad, Seattle Pipe Club Political Liaison Legislation Past**

- In the not too distant past, Washington law was quite different
- Tobacco shipments required age verification by the carrier
- This was very similar to other laws around the country
- Court actions in Maine made it clear that this approach was unworkable

## **Legislation Current**

- SSB 5340 was passed last session and is in effect today
- It replaced the Maine style law and is relatively straightforward
- As a result, it is very comprehensive
- Effectively, the law is a complete ban on shipments of tobacco products to residents
- One notable exception is that of cigars, which may be ordered by mail

## **Legislation Proposed**

- Pipes and cigars have a very similar profile
- In comparison with cigarettes, the tobacco is unadulterated
- Pipes and cigars are not inhaled and pose limited health risks
- They also share a history of similar legislation
- Our goal was a simple, short, and appropriate modification
- Adding pipe tobacco to the list of exemptions is clean
- This bill does NOT allow the transportation of roll your own tobacco
- This bill will allow us to enjoy our hobby as before

## **Health Care & Wellness**

A while back, before my 40th birthday, I suffered from panic attacks. I would wake up in the middle of the night, unable to breathe and with my heart racing. These episodes were very disturbing and unpleasant. I would have to make an effort to take small breaths through my nose and calm myself, and eventually my body would relax and I would be able to breathe through my mouth normally.

In some ways, I have a fairly classic Type A personality, with a small business and three young children at home besides. At first, I accepted these panic attacks as coming with the territory, but after they became more frequent and more severe, I was faced with the possibility of serious medical intervention. I decided that I needed to have a diversion, a new hobby, something that would force me to relax. I became a pipe smoker.

Good pipe smoking technique requires a meditative approach to breathing. This in turn requires relaxation, either naturally or through conscious effort. It was a surprise to me when I realized, after three or four months of pipe smoking, that I had not had a panic attack in weeks. Smoking my pipe before or after dinner calms my nerves, relaxes my mind, and creates an environment for restful uneventful sleep.

I understand that pipe smoking, like many other pleasurable activities, has health risks. In my particular case, I prefer pipe smoking to other alternatives, like taking prescription drugs every day, surgery or wearing an enforced breathing apparatus at night. For me, the health benefits of pipe smoking outweigh the risks, and as an adult, I should be able to make this decision for myself.

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