

## **Tobacco Free Rhode Island SUPPORTS S 2380**

- S 2380 would increase the penalty for violating any state law regulating the illicit sale of cigarettes.
- The Tobacco Free Rhode Island statewide network supports this bill because it is intended to stop cigarette tax cheating and smuggling: activities which result in cigarettes being sold at cheap prices that are too low to discourage smoking.
- We strongly support high prices on all tobacco products because high price is the number one most effective single measure to prevent youth from starting smoking, and a high price also motivates adult smokers to quit.
- Increasing the penalties for cigarette smuggling and tax evasion will be an incentive to merchants to abide by the tax laws, maintaining higher prices, and contributing to lowering the smoking rate in our state.
- Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Rhode Island, killing 1,500 Rhode Islanders every year.