

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

April 13, 1999 LB 505

SENATOR LANDIS: ...advertising programs that work, but most of all, by price. And as soon as I get a chance to speak again, I'll defend that point.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Chris Peterson.

SENATOR C. PETERSON: I apologize, Mr. Speaker. I give my time to Senator Landis.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Senator Landis.

SENATOR LANDIS: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, a question that's been asked of me informally is, look, couldn't we do this some other way? Couldn't we do this by education? And some education works. Couldn't we do this by criminalizing youths' behavior? It might have some modest impact. However, those are sort of ex post facto, working backwards from trying to get people to, you know, in the case of the criminality, of catching them after they've started smoking and deterring them because of penalties. In a 1998 report, taking action to reduce tobacco use, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, here's their conclusion. The single most direct and reliable method for reducing consumption is to increase the price of tobacco products, thus encouraging the cessation and reducing the level of initiation. That means beginning. Reducing the level of initiation of tobacco use, stopping people from starting. And who does that affect? It affects the 90 percent of smokers that began when they were kids. People start smoking as kids, as 13, 14, and 15. By the time you're 18, 90 percent of the people who are ever going to smoke have started smoking when they were a kid. These are not people exercising personal freedoms in the form of an adult decision, these are people being caught by the effective advertising of tobacco industries and their advertisements at a highly impressionable set of individuals who do not have the level of expertise or judgment that we say are sufficient to, in some cases, drive a car, in other cases drink liquor, in other cases vote, in other cases join the military, or to sign a contract, and yet they've made the decision to smoke. They've become addicted, they spend their lives trying to beat the habit, and they die young. Let me state it from a different point of view. The National Cancer Institute expert