The case for stronger tobacco retail licensure laws in Alabama.

Across 30 major cities in the United States, an average of 63% of public schools are located within 1,000 feet (about two city blocks) of a tobacco retailer.

The tobacco industry’s focus on retail spending is strongly associated with smoking initiation, particularly among youth, where marketing is more common at tobacco retailers near schools and where teens are more likely to shop.

A study examining tobacco retailers across 30 major cities in the U.S. found there are five times more tobacco retailers located in the lowest-income neighborhoods compared to the highest-income neighborhoods.

In an evaluation of multiple jurisdictions with varying degrees of retail licensure requirements, the jurisdictions with more restrictive requirements benefited from lower cigarette and e-cigarette use and initiation among youth and young adults.

Retail licensure laws are an effective approach to decrease the prevalence of youth tobacco use by:

- Defining all products as “tobacco products” so that retailers are clear on compliance, inspections and enforcement.
- Requiring a tobacco retailer to renew their license annually and pay a license fee. A licensing fee would fund compliance and enforcement checks.
- Imposing mandatory penalties on retailers who sell to youth.
- Ensuring every retailer undergoes a minimum of one compliance check each year.
- Removing penalties on our youth for purchase, use or possession.
The Toll of Tobacco by the Numbers:

- **1 in 3** teens is vaping.
- **1 in 3** of high school students smoke.
- Almost **20%** of high school students use e-cigarettes -- close to the same percentage of adults in Alabama who smoke.
- It is predicted that **108,000** current Alabama youth will ultimately die prematurely from smoking.
- According to the National Youth Tobacco Survey, **16.5%** of middle and high school students under the age of 18 report obtaining e-cigarettes in a vape shop in the past month, and **9.8%** from a gas station or convenience store.
- **75%** of youth who tried to buy tobacco products reported they were not refused sale.

**TRL gives Alabama a "License to Protect"**

Tobacco Retail Licensure is a tool that local governments use to regulate businesses to help ensure compliance with the law. “TRL” provides standards for retailers of tobacco products and electronic smoking devices -- a strong policy would ensure the minimum legal sales age is being enforced, that applicable local, state, and federal laws are being followed, and where applicable, taxes are being accurately collected.