

To the Massachusetts State Legislature,

As former sales representatives for General Nutrition Centers (GNC) and the PERFORMIX supplement company, we were often left astonished by the number of adolescents from as young as 12 to 17 years old, without their parents, looking for weight-loss and muscle building supplements in stores. We believe that children do not need supplements, especially at such young ages. Most brands have product labels stating they are for customers 18 years of age and older, however, this is not enforced, especially based on our first-hand experiences, since youth are allowed to purchase these products despite being under 18. Thus, we proudly support the Massachusetts House Bill H.2331 and Senate Bill S.1525 to ban the sale of these supplements to those under the age of 18 to keep young people away from the dangers of these products.

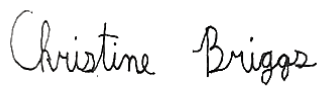
During our time in sales for supplement companies, and also as active gym-goers, many kids have asked what supplements to take along with what are the strongest weight-loss and muscle building supplements out on the market today. The daunting frequently-asked question of “What’s the strongest supplement you have?,” from our time employed with GNC and PERFORMIX, has led us to further believe that these products had been heavily marketed towards young people. What perpetuates this issue further is the industry that surrounds these products. When denying minors from buying these products, sales representatives and store managers, such as ourselves, would often get in trouble due to it causing a decrease in sales revenue. It was very tough for us both to be able to speak out against the very products that we were employed to sell, but we did take the time to speak to these young people in our stores about these products not being good for them. Though they would often go ahead and buy these products anyway, we hope that lawmakers hear our voices and do their part in taking action to keep young people safe by voting in favor of this vital legislation, which would truly make a difference in protecting youth from these harmful products.

Muscle-building supplements across the board are loaded with different ingredients that are claimed to provide energy, endurance, and focus, but there is no evidence to support their use. Most muscle-building supplements contain extremely high levels of caffeine, typically 250 mg to 300 mg, which surpass “normal” amounts of caffeine (for example, an 8 fluid ounce cup of coffee has approximately 95 mg of caffeine). In addition, these products are not rigorously regulated by the Food and Drug Administration, as these products may very likely be laced with dangerous chemicals and steroids with little oversight. Several companies have even been shut down due to having live and dead rodents along with traces of rodent urine and feces in their protein supplements. The Department of Justice filed a complaint for permanent injunction against three brands on behalf of the FDA. (See: ast-ss.com/fda-investigators-discovered-live-and-dead-rodents-and-rodent-urine-feces-in-protein-supplements) These products should not be purchasable by minors, especially without parental permission because of the fact that the Food and Drug Administration does not rigorously regulate supplements like they do other consumer goods.

Supplement abuse happens way too often and weight-loss and muscle-building supplements are commonly used among athletes and students of all ages. Many people are misinformed or unaware of the harmful side effects of supplements. We strongly urge you to vote in favor of Massachusetts H.2215/S.1465 to ban the sale of these over-the-counter supplements to those under the age of 18 to keep young people away from the dangers of these products.



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