

Ban on cigarette displays 'will ruin corner shops'

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ANTI-smoking campaigners say it will stop children buying **cigarettes**, but a Whitstable shopkeeper says a ban on cigarette vending machines and on cigarette displays will ruin her business.

Debbie Corris is the South East spokeswoman for the Tobacco Retailers Alliance, and also runs Jim Ingrams newsagent in Tankerton Road.

On Tuesday, the backbench amendment to the government's Health Bill, to outlaw cigarette vending machines in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, was passed by the Commons without going to a vote.

It will now go before the House of Lords, where, if approved, it will become law.

The move was welcomed by health organisations including the British Heart Foundation, whose chief executive Peter Hollins said it was a 'victory' for those who campaigned on the issue.

But many shopkeepers, including Mrs Corris, are calling for the Health Bill to be amended because they are concerned people will no longer shop in their newsagents if it goes through, but instead go to supermarkets.

She said: "They have got absolutely no evidence it will stop children buying **cigarettes**.

"Canada has had a **display** ban, there is no evidence there to prove that it reduced smoking at all. In fact, in the areas where there wasn't a ban, youth smoking fell rapidly and in the areas where there was a ban it did not fall at all.

"People will change their habits in buying tobacco and will go to supermarkets and not use corner shops.

"All communities need their corner shops. We are seeing the post offices go, the pubs closing down, the corner shops are the heart of the community, people come in to chat, everybody knows each other and for people who can't drive or get to their local supermarket they need their local shop."