



April 10, 2019

Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chair Findley, Vice-Chair Marsh, and Members of the Committee,

Re: Children First for Oregon support for HB 2270

Children First represents the interests of Oregon's nearly 875,000 children and believes that together, with communities and leaders across the state, we can build a state where all children thrive.

Through the development of the Children's Agenda we work with our more than 110 partner organizations to identify and elevate legislative concepts that will support the needs of Oregon's children. Increasing the tobacco tax will not only help fund the Oregon Health Plan and provide targeted dollars for prevention and cessation programs, but it has the added benefit of lowering the number of children and youth who use tobacco products.

Research shows that raising the price of tobacco and nicotine products is the single most effective tool to reducing use. A 10% increase in price will lead to a 4% decrease in adult consumption and a 7% decrease in youth consumption.

We know that tobacco companies have targeted communities of color, tribes, low-income, and LGBTQ communities for decades in their advertising campaigns and now youth with e-cigarette campaigns. This bill will provide meaningful investments in community and culturally specific programs to address prevention and cessation of tobacco and nicotine, so that when people are ready to quit, there are resources for them to do so.

E-cigarette companies are now targeting kids with highly addictive, nicotine-filled products to get them hooked on a product. Since 2017 the number of middle schoolers who say they have tried an e-cigarette has increased by 48%, effectively creating a whole new generation of addicted smokers. It is critical for us to take action to slow the number of youth using these products, and HB 2270 can help with those outcomes.

We ask that you support raising our tobacco taxes through HB 2270 to support the Oregon Health Plan, address equity concerns, and limit the number of youth who use these products. Thank you for your attention and service.

Sincerely,

Chris Coughlin
Legislative Director