

Submitter: Brandy Steelhammer

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB3090

Dear Members of the House Committee On Behavioral Health & Health Care,

As a social worker and a mother to two young adults, I urge your support of HB 3090. I have seen firsthand the prevalence of vaping among Oregon's youth. Ending the sale of flavored tobacco products, including menthol, will protect our children from the harmful effects that these products have, including lung disease, cancer, and heart disease. We have let Big Tobacco ruin too many lives already. Their decades of scheming and tricking people, most notably children, into addiction must stop. 85% of youth e-cigarette users report that they started with a flavored product, yet less than 25% of all smokers report using flavored products (www.flavorshookoregonkids.org). Allowing the tobacco industry to sell flavored products such as fruit, candy/desserts, mint and menthol is enticing youth into a dangerous, addictive trap.

The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that youth use of nicotine in any form, including e-cigarettes, is unsafe. Nicotine is a highly addictive drug and can harm adolescent brain development, particularly the parts of the brain responsible for attention, memory and learning. The Surgeon General also found that using nicotine in adolescence can increase risk of future addiction to other drugs. (www.tobaccofreekids.org)

Smoking kills more than 8,000 Oregonians per year and costs Oregon over \$5 Billion per year in medical costs and lost productivity (www.flavorshookoregonkids.org). Please protect Oregon's children, including mine, from the dangerous, capitalistic schemes of the tobacco industry, who for decades has unabashedly put profits over human lives.

Respectfully Submitted,
Brandy Steelhammer, LCSW