

March 20, 2023

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Nelson and Goodwein, and members of the House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care,

I am writing in support of HB 3090, the Preventing Nicotine Addiction bill, which will protect our kids and our communities by ending the sale of all flavored tobacco products in Oregon.

The evidence that kids are being targeted by tobacco companies is incontrovertible. Fueled by over 7 thousand kid-friendly flavors, like cotton candy and gummy bears; and large doses of nicotine, electronic cigarettes are hooking a new generation on nicotine and threatening decades of progress in reducing the use of tobacco among youth.

Currently, one in five high school students uses flavored tobacco and although I was an adolescent before the vaping epidemic took hold, I am exceedingly worried for the young people in my family, notably, my 7-year-old nephew who is already well aware of what a vape pen is as he sees them frequently in the community, and the media. He perceives the appealing packaging and all the fun flavors as candy and not as a harmful substance. The more normalized vaping is, the more desensitized kids become to it, and thus the more likely they will be to try them because they are so mainstream.

Over the years, the tobacco industry has ignored research that demonstrates the appealing nature of flavored tobacco products among children, and the direct impact flavored tobacco has on increasing adolescent nicotine addiction and the use of other tobacco products like cigarettes.

However, consider these facts:

- Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death nationwide.
- Of those who smoke, More than 80% began smoking as kids.
- In 2022, 84.9% of youth vapers used exclusively flavored varieties.
- Retail sales of flavored tobacco have plummeted in cities and states that have enacted bans, with San Francisco seeing a 96% drop in retail sales of flavored tobacco products between the pre-policy and enforcement periods.

To reduce youth tobacco use, it is imperative to prohibit the sale of flavored e-cigarettes and other flavored tobacco products including mint and menthol flavors. Because ending the sale of these products will make it harder for the tobacco industry to target youth, we can prevent millions of kids from picking up these products. I urge you to please support ending the sale of all flavored tobacco products in Oregon.

Sincerely,  
Natalie Norvell Nicklas  
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