

Flavors Hook Oregon Kids
HB 3090 Testimony Letter

March 22, 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. Ending the sale of all flavored tobacco products in Oregon will protect our children and communities.

I am a parent, grandparent, foster parent, educator, a previous behavioral health provider and member of the public health field. I am also a proud Oregonian.

I support this bill because I have watched so many youth in my community become hooked on nicotine and eventually hard drugs with flavored tobacco products as their entry. My adoptive daughter started vaping with flavored vape pens at the age of 8. She has since then become dependent on vape, marijuana and other harder drugs. I have witnessed many children in my small town using flavored tobacco products. Many vape products are being brought into our classrooms and used in shirt sleeves right in the middle of class. Tobacco is a problem amongst our youth and no child no matter their background or upbringing is exempt from the temptation.

Our kids are being targeted by Big Tobacco. Our kids are using flavored tobacco. While product names like Cotton Candy and Tutti Frutti sound harmless, they are very dangerous. Consider the facts:

- More than 3 million middle and high school students use tobacco and e-cigarettes.
- 85% of youth e-cigarette users use flavored products.
- Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Oregon, killing over 8,000 Oregonians a year.

Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm adolescent brain development. Taking action now will help protect our kids, prevent serious health impacts and avoid a lifetime of Addiction.

Why is this bill necessary, when retailers are already prohibited from selling flavored

tobacco to young people under age 21? Because it's not working. Children whose frontal lobes are still actively forming are being presented with substances that look and smell enticing. Children whose executive functioning is not fully developed which leads to poor self control and poor reasoning skills. Children who do not want to be left out or different. Children who are not old enough to consent for themselves are being faced with these enticing products and the law isn't working to keep it out of their hands. They still have access every single day.

- The Oregon Health Authority recently reported that 25% of Oregon businesses sold tobacco to underage buyers.

Passage of HB 3090, the Preventing Nicotine Addiction Act, will go a long way to protect youth across Oregon from falling into the trap of nicotine addiction and tobacco and e-cigarette use, as well as the host of serious health consequences associated with their use.

Sincerely,

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