

**Rex Putnam High School's Unity Club (Clackamas County) with support from Vibrant Future Coalition and Flavor Hook Oregon Kids**

**March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023**

**House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care  
Oregon State House of Representative**

**RE: HB 3090, Protecting youth from nicotine addiction**

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

We are members of Unity Club at Rex Putnam High School in Milwaukie, Oregon. This club is the similar to a Gay Straight Alliance, where we offer a safe space for people to be themselves and find ways to support one another. We are 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. Following are a few of our comments and stories.

As students we support this bill because we have had personal experiences of being exposed and offered vaping products in middle school and high school. We have observed how these big companies have been targeting us. We believe that vaping products should only be accessible by adults. As a teacher and parent, something as unhealthy as vape pens being in the hands of youth is scary, especially since they can get addicted pretty quickly. Especially when we look at the vast amount of ingredients that go into creating these flavors.

Big Tobacco targets us with advertising, flavors, and product placement. Seeing flavors like Cotton Candy and Tutti Frutti in convenience stores next to actual candy is confusing. Adults say not to vape, but then why are the flavors candy or other sweets kids like? 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. We need to take action to protect future kids from damaging their health and being addicted to vaping.

Getting flavored tobacco if you are under 21 isn't difficult. Many of my peers are actually able to purchase it in stores:

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

We ask you to please support HB 3090, the Preventing Nicotine Addiction Act. This policy can prevent future kids across Oregon from nicotine addiction and the poor physical, mental, and developmental health challenges caused by these products.

Thank you for caring about the health and well-being of Oregon's kids.

Sincerely,  
Unity Club at Rex Putnam High School

*\*\* This letter was written with the help of Vibrant Future Coalition during their weekly afterschool club. Vibrant Future Coalition is a coalition in North Clackamas and East Multnomah Counties that strives to educate and create community-wide change in order to reduce youth substance use and promote positive life skills for youth in our community.*