

Representative Hai Pham, DMD
House District 36



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 5th, 2023

Dear Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez and Members of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means,

I am writing today to **share my strong support of [HB 3090A](#)**, a bill that would prevent our youth from suffering from a lifetime of tobacco addiction.

In addition to being a state representative, I am also a pediatric dentist and have been practicing in Washington County for fourteen years both in the clinic and hospital settings.

I love my job, and I love being able to make a positive impact on a child's health every time they come into my office. As a state representative, that goal has not changed, which is why I am a co-chief sponsor of HB 3090A to improve the health of our children and help prevent a lifetime of addiction.

It is no surprise that tobacco products are dangerous to our health. In 2009, the federal government banned flavored cigarettes with the hope that it would reduce usage, and in particular, prevent young kids from starting and getting addicted to nicotine.

That ban, along with various public health campaigns, proved successful. **Now, we are faced with yet another crisis - increased usage by kids of other flavored tobacco products such as vapes and e-cigarettes.**

Vapes in particular have been marketed as safer than traditional cigarettes and come in flavors such as cotton candy, orange soda, and watermelon ice to make them more appealing to children.

The numbers show this impact - 81% of young users start with a flavored product. What kids and young adults don't know is that many vapes and e-cigarettes are not safer than traditional cigarettes, in fact, many popular brands still include nicotine in their products, spurring youth addiction.

If we don't act now to stem this problem, [68,000 of Oregon kids under 18 today will die prematurely from smoking later on in life.](#)

Our current regulation and enforcement system has also not kept up to par in reducing these health impacts on kids.

In a series of 500 legal-age sale inspections conducted last year by the [Oregon Tobacco Retail License program](#), [26% of tobacco retailers](#) in our state failed a decoy operation test. These numbers were higher for certain retailers: 23% of convenience stores, 27% of tobacco/vape shops, and 37% of grocery stores failed in the first year of inspections.

This data shows that children and teenagers are still accessing these products, despite current safeguards.

As a business owner, I understand that this bill will impact small businesses, but I believe we must put our children's health first. If we can prevent a child or teenager from using tobacco before the age of 19, they will be [much less likely](#) to start later in life.

As a pediatric dentist, I want to also emphasize the impact these substances have on our children's oral health. Vapes, e-cigarettes, chewing tobacco and any other tobacco products can lead to increased risk of oral cancer, gum disease and many other systemic health problems.

Additionally, young users don't continue using just flavored tobacco, instead, they often switch to traditional cigarettes later in life. Traditional cigarettes are a well-documented cause of cancer - both in your lungs and mouth.

By ending the sale of flavored tobacco, we can protect our children from preventable illnesses and oral health problems, and save lives.

As parents we want to make sure we do everything we can to keep our children safe, that is why I urge the Joint Ways & Means Committee's support of HB 3090A this session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hai Pham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Hai" and last name "Pham" clearly distinguishable.

Representative Hai Pham, DMD