

Submitter: Myroslav Szkodyn
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB702

Senate Bill 702

Hello, my name is Myroslav Szkodyn and I thank you for taking the time to read my statement.

While I understand the necessity to control the ability for children to access tobacco, I also believe parts of this bill are a drastic overreach. I would like to ask the committee to amend and exclude parts of the bill as currently written, pertaining specifically to the bill making pipe tobacco illegal.

It is my understanding, after calling my rep and a talking with Rep. Fredericks office staff (Cameron), that all forms of pipe tobacco will be illegal if this bill passes, due to some of them being flavored. I could not gather from the bill, but in talking to staff at Rep. Fredericks office, they seemed to think all pipe tobaccos are to be included and would be illegal, even though some are not flavored.

I tried searching the internet for example cases of kids getting their nicotine hits from pipe tobacco, and could not find a single instance of kids using or buying pipe tobacco to smoke. I would love to hear of any reported cases of teenagers becoming addicted to pipe tobacco, and routinely using that tobacco to get a nicotine high, but I just don't think they exist. I do, however, see teenagers vaping and smoking cigarettes almost every day. Pipe smoking is just too much work and too fickle of a process for kids to take the time to learn. In all my years as a teenager and adult, I've never seen a young person smoking a tobacco pipe.

From what I understand in the Bill, vapes and cigarettes would still be available, even if this bill passes. Making all forms of pipe tobacco illegal is a drastic overreach and completely unnecessary if the committee is hoping to alleviate tobacco usage among kids. It is punishing a small group of consenting adults, while doing almost nothing to curb tobacco usage among teens.

It is unfortunate that this bill carves out exemptions for FDA approved vape products, so really, there won't be any less availability for kids to get vapes, which I had thought was the point of this bill. So that means Vuse Alto Pods and Joy Pods, other vapes and cigarettes would still be easily accessible to kids. How will tobacco usage among teens be any different if this bill passes than it is currently? A couple of vape flavors won't be available and no pipe tobacco, but cigarettes and specific vapes will

be readily available? What changes with kids being able to get cigarettes and vapes as easily as they can get them now? I fail to see the benefit of punishing a small group of adults, but not fundamentally changing how easy it is for kids to acquire vapes and cigarettes. It seems as if the companies with enough money and influence have been able to sway the direction of this bill.

In closing, I would urge the committee to consider revising the bill to exclude pipe tobaccos of any form or kind from being illegal in this state. Pipe smoking is a rich tradition, dating back many generations and is woven into the fabric of this country. As a consenting adult, I know what the choices I make may do to me, and I would like to still be able to make those choices. Surely smoking a pipe every now and again can't be more hazardous to my health than living in America in 2025! That said, I realize we are not free in this country, but we do have certain choices that elected officials allow us to have. I am asking that the choice for me to smoke a tobacco pipe could still be a choice I can make in the future. I am watching this bill closely, and will use the outcome of this bill to guide the future voting choices I make.

Thank you for taking the time to accept my testimony.

Myroslav Szkodyn