

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

My name is Jennifer Forsyth and I live in Portland. I'm a mom of three children and have been a volunteer with Parents Against Vaping for several years.

Vaping has affected all of my children in different ways, with the most significant impact on my youngest child. My son was in 9th or 10th grade when this vaping craze really took off. He started vaping because of the sweet candy flavors and because "everyone was doing it". After just one or two hits, he was hooked and within a month, he was addicted. Like many of his friends, he believed vapes were just "harmless water vapor," and because they came in fun, kid-friendly flavors from mango and bubblegum to birthday cake, they seemed harmless.

Vapes are everywhere – from social media ads to gas station counters, often placed right next to candy, which make it all the more appealing for a vulnerable teen. Tobacco and vape companies know what they are doing - the marketing and flavors are specifically designed to appeal to kids. They know that youth are easy targets and they're doing everything they can to reel them in. My son is proof of that.

The impact it had on my son was profound. After struggling with vaping for over six years, he finally quit at the age of 22. But the toll it has taken on him is heartbreaking. I saw his health decline – poor appetite, stomach aches, difficulty breathing, loss of focus – and his motivation and self-esteem plummeted. His schoolwork and relationships with our family also suffered. As a parent, it's gut-wrenching to watch your child struggle with addiction, knowing how difficult it is for them to break free from something that's so accessible and addictive. My son has faced side effects for years and I fear he'll live with the consequences of vaping for the rest of his life.

This isn't just a problem in our family – it's a nationwide crisis. Millions of young people have been duped by the fun and fruity flavors and have gotten hooked on vaping. That's why I'm in full support of removing flavored nicotine products from the market and making it harder for kids to access them. It's time to stop letting the tobacco industry profit off the health of our children.

Thank you for your time and consideration.