

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

To whom it may concern.

I urge the committee to vote against this legislation as the arguments in favor are specious, and history shows woefully ineffective.

Having almost 50 years in the tobacco industry, I have seen every attempt to curtail, and limit the sales of tobacco, and tobacco products, most of which have failed to fulfill their stated intended purpose, however, have achieved the purpose of politicians, which is to raise or implement taxes.

The reason given is always for “the good of the people” or to “protect our youth” I submit neither of which is the true purpose, as the end result is always the same minor achievement of your stated purpose or goal and the raising of or implementing of new taxes. Were your stated reason true then apparently the only people who care about our youth are tobacco users otherwise everyone would be buying tobacco to generate more tax revenue to fund your alleged programs.

These efforts do nothing to achieve your goals, however, you will supply fact and figure which show they do. There is an old accounting term...figures don't lie, but liars' figure. I also have a phrase...there is a fine line between truth and honest, you can tell the truth without being honest, however, you cannot be honest without telling the truth. Truth is a word politicians love to use but seldom use.

By banning that which you wish to ban will do nothing more than to drive an underground black market for these items, and please do not insult the intelligence of the people saying no such thing can or will take place. Black market sales of tobacco have been a lucrative form of income for eons. There have been flavor bans implemented and yet sales still exist.

You say youth are not intelligent or mature enough to make their own informed decisions or take accountability for their actions, yet you want to give them the ability to choose their gender at ages far below the legal age limit to buy alcohol, tobacco, or firearms which you said were necessary because of their maturity. You allow them to go fight for your freedom, yet they cannot buy cigarettes or alcohol, what is your argument for that? Why no just be honest and tell the truth, all you really want is an increase in the tax base so you can divert the funds to everything other than their stated or intended purpose. There is that pesky word again, “truth” something politicians have a hard time saying with sincerity.

In this state, I find these hearings or discussions are basically a “dog and pony show” for public consumption, and to give you the ability to appease your conscience that

you are doing your job.

You found it find to legalize drugs of all types, including mushrooms, only to find it has caused more problems than it solved, including vehicular incidents and an increase in criminal activity. What you fail to address is, tobacco is a legal product. You cannot or are unwilling to change that, so you continue to try taxing it out of existence.

In closing, I urge all of you to set aside this legislation as ineffective and nothing more than a legislative tactic to increase taxes on a portion of the citizenry you do not care about yet will take the financial backing of their parent companies and their lobbyists. Perhaps you would be serving the public best if you focus your desire to look out for our youth by giving your attention to their education, raising Oregon up from the 49th worst state in the union and raising the bar to graduating instead of lowering as you did. I also must question your sincerity when you feel the legalization of drugs is a better choice than the sales of tobacco and tobacco products.

Respectfully submitted

Terrell K. Vincent