

March 4, 2024

Senate Committee on Health Care

SB 702

Dear Chair Patterson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tian Gilbert and I am submitting testimony in support of SB 702. Many people my age and younger already are addicted, and you can see this addiction simply walking down the street in most urban areas. Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease worldwide. Most tobacco use begins during adolescence and young adulthood. Starting at a young age, this sets kids up for a lifetime of nicotine dependence which causes serious health conditions like heart and lung disease, and premature death. 95% of adults who smoke report that they started before the age of 21, so intervening before this point is vital.

The movement "Flavors Hook Kids" explains that 90% of youth e-cigarette users use flavored e-cigarettes, which suggests that taking flavored e-cigarettes off the market may prevent dependency later on in life. E-cigarettes were invented with the promise to stop adult smokers stop smoking, but flavors and colors seem chosen to get younger demographics hooked instead. The American Medical Association states that people under 25 are most at risk from nicotine because it has greater impacts on the brain at these ages, including hindering the ability to learn and shortening attention span.

If we are able to end the sale of flavored nicotine products, it is one of the first steps to protect the health of Oregon children, and prevent health issues later on in life as well.

I strongly urge Oregon legislators to pass Senate Bill 702, not just to protect Oregonians, but also to pave the way for other states to help their citizens as well.