

## **Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 702**

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Andrea Bateman, and I am a pediatrician from Bend, Oregon. I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 702, which seeks to restrict the sale of flavored tobacco products.

When I was growing up, it was uncommon to see teenagers smoking excessive numbers of cigarettes a day. Traditional cigarettes are expensive, they smell bad, and smoking in public spaces—let alone in a classroom—was nearly impossible. However, with the rise of flavored electronic cigarettes and nicotine pouches, I now see adolescents who use nicotine all day, every day.

As a physician caring primarily for adolescents, I am deeply concerned by the number of my patients who begin vaping the moment they wake up, continue throughout the school day, and use their devices as the last thing they do before going to bed. Some even wake up in the middle of the night to use nicotine. Teachers—despite their vigilance—often struggle to detect nicotine use, as students discreetly use vape pens or hide nicotine pouches in their mouths during class.

While I recognize that some adults use these products to transition away from traditional cigarettes, the reality is that flavored tobacco products are fueling youth addiction at alarming rates. Despite regulations intended to prevent sales to those under 21, countless young people are accessing and becoming addicted to these products.

Tobacco companies aggressively market flavored nicotine products to teenagers. Flavors like cotton candy, watermelon, and strawberry are intentionally designed to attract young users. One brand even offers a reward system where users can accumulate points to redeem for merchandise, including T-shirts and even coveted concert tickets to a popular musical artist.

Nicotine is one of the most addictive substances known. It increases the risk of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease, and inhaling foreign substances leads to significant pulmonary complications. For adolescents, nicotine also has harmful effects on brain development, with potential long-term consequences for attention, learning, and mental health.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 702 to restrict flavored tobacco products and protect the health and well-being of Oregon's youth. We have an opportunity to prevent a new generation from becoming addicted to nicotine, and I implore you to take action now.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrea Bateman, MD  
Board Member, Oregon Pediatric Society