

Hisham's Testimony

if asked a question you

don't feel comfortable answering, say "That is a great question Senator, and I would like to follow up in writing with you and the other members of the committee".

Hello Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Anderson, members of the committee my name is Hisham, and I am here today on behalf of Upstream Public Health & The Tobacco Free Coalition of Oregon to support Senate Bill 702 to end the sale of flavored commercial tobacco products. I live in Portland Oregon and have lived here for the greater majority of my life. I currently attend Reynolds High School, where I encountered vape products for the first time.

I am passionate about this policy because there was one time I remember walking down to the bathroom in school. I just wanted to do my business and leave, like anybody else would. But when I entered through the door, my nose was lifted by the smell of sweet-scented candy and fruit smells. I walked past the group of people vaping, masking themselves in the bathroom, but as I walked past, one of the boys in the group called out and asked a question that seemed alien to me, "You want a hit?". I stopped to see if he was talking to me, and he nodded in confirmation. I said that I was fine, yet that interaction made me realize how normalized and easy it is for vapes to be used and spread around schools.

This shows how accessible tobacco products are to young people even if it's not in your home and it's readily available in spaces where youth are supposed to be protected. Luckily, I was confident and equipped with the tools to say no, however other youth may fall victim to peer pressure due to not having the support and skills to say no. That has led me to be here today to advocate how senate bill 702 can help alleviate these types of situations in school by reducing the amount of young people using flavored tobacco products today. Passing Senate Bill 702 will make youth less susceptible to predatory practices that tobacco companies are doing to make commercial tobacco products more enticing to youth. These practices include using bright, colorful marketing and packaging as well as exotic sweet flavors.

I urge you to vote yes on Senate Bill 702 for the sake of my life, the youth around me, and the next generation of young people.

Thank you for your time,