

Muna Yusuf

Center for African Immigrant and Refugee Organization (CAIRO)

02/06/25

Senate Committee

Oregon State Legislature

900 Court St. NE

Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Muna Yusuf, and I am writing in **strong support of Senate Bill 702**, which would prohibit the sale and distribution of flavored tobacco and nicotine products in Oregon. As an **education program manager**, I have seen firsthand the devastating impact that flavored tobacco products have on **youth and marginalized communities, particularly within immigrant and refugee populations**.

Flavored tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes and flavored e-cigarettes, have been **strategically marketed to youth and communities of color**, leading to disproportionately high addiction rates. Research has consistently shown that flavored products act as a gateway to long-term tobacco use, with over **80% of young smokers reporting that their first tobacco product was flavored**. The tobacco industry has long targeted Black, Latino, Indigenous, and immigrant communities with menthol and other flavored tobacco products, contributing to significant health disparities, including **higher rates of lung disease, heart disease, and cancer**.

As someone who has worked in **tobacco prevention and community health**, We see the consequences in our communities every day—families losing loved ones to tobacco-related diseases, youth struggling with nicotine addiction, and public health systems burdened by preventable illnesses. **SB 702 is a necessary step in protecting public health and preventing the next generation from becoming addicted to nicotine**.

Furthermore, allowing **local governments to adopt stricter regulations** will empower communities to address tobacco-related harm based on their needs. This provision ensures that Oregon remains proactive in reducing tobacco use and safeguarding community health.

I urge the committee to pass SB 702 and take a **firm stand against the tobacco industry's harmful practices**. This legislation will **save lives, reduce health disparities, and protect our youth from a lifetime of addiction**. Thank you for your time and leadership on this critical public health issue. I am happy to provide further insight or answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Muna Yusuf