

Dear Members of the Senate Committee of Education,

My name is Ashley-Clare Sarafa, and I am an 11th-grade student at Liberty High School in Hillsboro, Oregon. I am an avid supporter of this bill, which I believe would greatly contribute to safe and healthy school environments for youth.

School bathrooms are widely known around Liberty to be a space where many students congregate, often to engage in illicit activities. School bathrooms serve a purpose, and with the rise of vaping in schools, that purpose is being abused by teenagers who use it as a space to vape. Vaping in schools is extremely detrimental to students' health, both those who engage in vaping themselves and those who are inadvertently exposed to the toxicity it creates.

After spending three years at Liberty High School, I have been exposed to a wide range of experiences revolving around forbidden activities in school bathrooms. Sickly sweet but obviously alluring sweet flavors have ensnared some of my classmates and encouraged them to engage in a toxic habit of puffing candy-flavored air deceptively packaged to appeal to teens. Dr. Nora D. Volkow, the director of NIH's National Institute on Drug Abuse, was cited in a study on teen vaping as saying, "Teens are clearly attracted to the marketable technology and flavorings seen in vaping devices" (NIH 1). Mango, cotton candy, and mint. Every one of these vape flavors I have been exposed to in Liberty High School bathrooms. In fact, I found the packaging for a mint-flavored vape floating in a school toilet, with the FDA-required label warning of the addictive qualities of nicotine waterlogged, but clearly visible. The prevalence of vaping in schools is only increasing, a fact that can be seen by many high school students, including myself. In 2024, the FDA found that "2.25 million middle and high school students reported current use [...] of any tobacco product" (FDA 1). Action on this substantial problem is needed in order to combat the substance use epidemic that endangers the youth that make up our future.

Vape detectors have been proven to be largely successful in reducing the incidence of vaping in school bathrooms. Schools that have implemented these detectors have reported a significant decrease in vaping incidents, creating a safer and healthier environment for students. The proposed \$50,000 grant to Glencoe High School would not only fund the installation of these detectors but also set a precedent for other schools across the state to follow suit, hopefully including my own school, Liberty High School. Technology does have limitations, and it must be used in tandem with educational programs designed to inform students about the very real dangers of vaping. Addressing both the behavior and the environment is crucial for creating lasting change. This pilot program would be a proactive step towards reducing harmful substance use among students.

I strongly urge the committee to pass Senate Bill 544. This is an opportunity to address a pressing health issue impacting Oregon's youth and take a stand against the rise of vaping in our schools. Protecting students' health should be a priority, and this bill represents a necessary step toward that goal.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Ashley-Clare Sarafa