

Good afternoon Chair Nathanson and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Matt Evans, I'm a native Oregonian and I'm here representing the Taxpayer Association of Oregon to urge a "no" vote on HB 2528-A.

I'd like to make two brief points. First, this bill shifts some responsibilities for decision-making about tobacco and vaping including regulations and taxation – and therefore accountability for those decisions – from the duly-elected Legislature to the Oregon Health Authority. It is not possible for an Oregon voter to hold the OHA accountable for the decisions it makes. We would encourage you to retain responsibility – and accountability – for these decisions in this building. Anything else is anti-Democratic.

Secondly, I want to quickly address the disconnect we see between this body and how you are able to do your jobs.

Oregon's General Fund is almost wholly dependent on personal and corporate income tax revenues. A thriving, diverse economy is essential to the success of government in Oregon. We take a lot of actions designed to bring large businesses to Oregon, or to encourage them to expand here. But the Office of Economic Analysis would tell you that small businesses provide most of the jobs in Oregon. This bill could allow a dramatic, and perhaps fatal injury to a large number of small businesses in our State. It could shut down hundreds of tax-paying small businesses and put thousands of tax-paying Oregonians out of work. State Government is already claiming to be facing a large deficit in the coming biennium – decisions made under this bill will make that problem worse,

not better. We encourage you to always consider your decisions in the light that strong economic activity in our State is the only thing allowing you to fund what you truly care about.

We urge a “No” vote on HB 2528-A. I’d be happy to take any questions.