



Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue
Oregon State Senate
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Support for Senate Bill 702A

Dear Chair Meek, Vice Chair McLane, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of Next Up, we submit testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 702A to restrict the sale of flavored tobacco products in Oregon.

At Next Up, we amplify the voice and leadership of diverse young people to achieve a more just and equitable Oregon. We know that youth are not only the future, but they are the leaders of today. But right now, young people across our state are facing an aggressive public health crisis fueled by flavored tobacco products and the deliberate targeting of youth by the tobacco industry.

Studies are consistent: young people in Oregon are being harmed by flavored tobacco. With candy flavors like cotton candy, bubblegum, and watermelon ice, vapes are directly designed to appeal to young people.

Not to mention that some products are designed to mimic a highlighter or are made with video games on the side. They are easy to hide, heavily marketed on the social media platforms that youth are frequenting—they are pretending to be harmless. The opposite is true. These products are hooking a whole new generation of users to a life of addiction.

The data is alarming: Over 10% of Oregon 11th graders have reported using e-cigarettes in the past month,¹ and nearly 90% of youth users use flavored products.² With 95% of adults who smoke starting before 21,³ this will likely stick with them for years on end. This isn't just affecting youth development, it's affecting them for life.

¹ Oregon Health Authority, Oregon Student Health Survey.

² Results from the FDA 2024 Annual National Youth Tobacco Survey.

³ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2014.

We've heard from youth across Oregon who are seeing pervasive use of vapes in their schools, from the bathrooms to in the classrooms themselves. Even those who aren't using themselves are affected—from learning disruption to witnessing friends become addicted. It's hard when things that look so harmless can contain more nicotine than 40 cigarettes.

SB 702A is a crucial step towards protecting youth health and agency. This bill would limit flavored tobacco sales to OLCC-licensed liquor stores—establishments that bar entry to those under 21. This will reduce the number of retailers—and thereby youth access—from more than 2800 retailers to 282, likely fewer if the Oregon Supreme Court affirms the Appeals Court ruling upholding county ordinances prohibiting the sale of flavored tobacco products in Oregon's two most populous counties.

We urge the legislature to act now and pass SB 702A to take a necessary first step towards protecting Oregon youth from a lifetime of addiction and disease. Help them be the leaders that they are.

Thank you,

Isabela Villarreal

Policy and Communications Director

Next Up