

Submitter: Eleanor LeClair

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB702

I applaud our legislators for putting forward a bill that curbs youth access to vapes - that is important work and I am glad we are doing it! However, as the bill currently stands, it will also wipe out important cultural spaces across the state. Hookah lounges are adult-only, regulated businesses that act as important gathering spaces for many Middle Eastern, South Asian, and North African communities. Many of these businesses are immigrant-owned. A unilateral ban against flavored tobacco would further harm communities that are already facing prejudice and surveillance. Minors are not gaining access to flavored tobacco via hookah lounges, nor are they able to sneak hookahs around (they're huge!).

I am proud of Portland and Oregon for being places that value community and inclusion - let's keep it that way! Please include an exemption for hookah lounges in SB 702.