

Submitter: Harbhajan Ghotra

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB702

Here is a copy of the testimony I submitted if anyone wanted a base to tweet as their own

****Opposing Testimony to SB 702****

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 702, which seeks to prohibit the sale and distribution of flavored vapes, tobacco, and nicotine products. While I recognize the concerns surrounding youth usage and public health, I believe this bill fails to address the complexities of the issue and imposes unnecessary restrictions on responsible adult consumers.

1. ****Personal Choice and Autonomy****: Adults should have the freedom to choose what products they wish to consume, including flavored tobacco and nicotine products. By restricting access to these items, SB 702 undermines individual rights and personal responsibility. Informed adults should be trusted to make their own choices regarding their consumption preferences.
2. ****Economic Consequences****: The flavored vape and tobacco industry provides significant economic benefits, including jobs and tax revenue. Prohibiting these products would harm local convenience stores, which are often family-run businesses vital to our communities. These stores typically have a better track record for scanning IDs than many Oregon liquor stores, demonstrating their commitment to responsible sales. A ban not only threatens their livelihoods but also diminishes the variety of legal products available to adult consumers.
3. ****Harm Reduction****: For many adult smokers, flavored vapes and tobacco products serve as a less harmful alternative to traditional cigarettes. Banning these products may drive individuals back to combustible tobacco, which poses greater health risks. A more effective approach would be to promote harm reduction strategies while allowing adults access to safer alternatives.
4. ****Targeted Regulation Over Prohibition****: Rather than a blanket ban, we should consider targeted regulations that address the specific issues of youth access and misuse. Implementing age verification measures, marketing restrictions, and educational campaigns about responsible use would be more effective in mitigating health concerns without infringing on adult consumers' rights.

5. ****Community Engagement****: Local communities are best positioned to understand their unique needs and challenges regarding tobacco and nicotine use. A one-size-fits-all approach does not consider the diverse perspectives and lifestyles across Oregon. Engaging with local stakeholders and allowing communities to shape their own policies would lead to more effective and relevant solutions.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider the implications of SB 702. Prohibiting flavored vapes and tobacco products does not effectively address public health concerns and instead restricts personal freedoms and economic opportunities. Let us work together to find a balanced approach that respects individual choice while promoting public health.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,