

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

My name is Trevor, and I am a high school student in Salem and a constituent of Senator Patterson.

As any teenager in public school would agree, I've seen firsthand the impact that flavored tobacco products are having on kids my age. It's everywhere in school. You can smell the fruity or minty scents in the hallways and even in classrooms—it isn't just the bathrooms anymore. I know people who bring vapes into school like it's nothing—some of them say it's "just flavored air". I know it's not just flavored air. I've seen friends go from trying it once to needing hits between every class.

Some of the flavors are things like watermelon ice, cotton candy, and cool mint—things that sound more like candy than something that can mess with your lungs. That's the problem. It doesn't feel dangerous to a lot of kids, especially with how it's marketed and flavored. But the truth is, almost 90% of youth e-cigarette users use flavored products, and these flavors are exactly what pull kids in.¹

Over 10% of 11th graders in Oregon use e-cigarettes, and I think we all know that it's more common than that in some schools.² Teachers are trying, but it's almost impossible for them to make an impact because students are being targeted by the tobacco industry. These flavors and products don't just show up in stores, but they show up on our phones and in our friend circles. They are made to look cool, harmless, and tasty.

This issue hits even closer to home for me. I've seen family members who started using tobacco products as teenagers become addicted. I always hear that they didn't think it was that big of a deal at first, but now that they're trying to quit, I can see the real impact. Real people are struggling because of how accessible these products are. 95% of adults who smoke started before age 21, which shows the importance of getting in front of kids' use of tobacco products.³ It isn't just bad for our brain development, but can lead to complications later in life—through heart disease, lung disease, and addiction that continues to follow us through adulthood.

Senate Bill 702A is a reasonable and important step. By restricting the sale of flavored tobacco products, you can help protect kids like me from starting in the first place. I'm asking you to vote yes on SB 702A. We need your help to make schools safer, stop addiction before it starts, and protect our health and future.

Thank you for your consideration,
Trevor

¹ Results from the FDA 2024 Annual National Youth Tobacco Survey.

² Oregon Health Authority, Oregon Student Health Survey.

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