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STATE SENATOR
District 17



OREGON STATE SENATE

Testimony in Support of HB 2528 B: Nicotine Regulation

June 23, 2025

Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue

1:30 p.m., Hearing Room A

Chair Meek, Vice Chair McLane, and members of the committee.

For the record, my name is Lisa Reynolds, and I serve as Senator for Oregon's 17th District. I also work as a pediatrician serving children and families in my district and beyond.

I am here to testify in strong support of House Bill 2528 B, a modest but meaningful step in our state's effort to keep tobacco products out of the hands of our kids.

During my team's work on other tobacco-related legislation, we were alerted to an **alarming loophole in Oregon law exploited by the tobacco industry**. Under current Oregon law, pure nicotine products are not regulated as a tobacco product and, thus, minors are able to purchase these nicotine pouches, containing powdered nicotine and flavorings.

These products are exploding in use among American youth. And, we've discussed in this committee that nicotine is the most addictive substance on the planet, and most people become addicted as youth, minting life-long customers for big tobacco. This then brings the short-term side effects of nicotine, like anxiety, attention issues, and the demoralizing effects of not being able to quit the substance. And, of course, the long-term effects of tobacco products - mouth pathology as well as heart and lung disease, and the high risk for early death.

While we understand and appreciate that most retailers are trying to do the right thing by limiting access to individuals 21 and older, these products are totally unregulated, while other tobacco and nicotine products are. There is nothing legally stopping a retailer from selling these products to a minor. It is in the best interest of our youth and our state's public health to regulate these products, making it crystal clear to retailers and the general public that selling them to Oregonians under 21 years of age is illegal.

I also wanted to share my disappointment that the tax provision from this bill was removed in the House. Tobacco taxes are proven to reduce usage and to provide resources for our health care system and public health programs. Removing the tax from this bill also removes a known deterrent, in the form of a tax hike, to people using these products. Furthermore, any tax revenue should be sent to the systems that are most impacted by the epidemic of nicotine addiction – our public health and health care systems, and including funds for cessation from this addiction.

But I won't let perfect be the enemy of the good. This is a very important bill that takes us in the right direction of protecting minors from the harmful impacts of lifelong nicotine addiction. Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before this committee. Please vote yes on HB 2528 B.

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