

SB 990

Hello ladies and gentlemen, my name is George Bouton, and I am here today to urge the members of the joint committee on public health to vote no on Senate Bill 990.

Switching from tobacco cigarettes to electronic cigarettes has changed my life in many positive ways. Two years ago congestion in my lungs from smoking cigarettes created difficulty in my breathing, everyday tasks would leave me out of breath, and my sleep and waking hours were often interrupted by fits of coughing. One day at the request of my fiancée, I bought an electronic cigarette, and a pack of cigarettes at the same time. I tried the electronic cigarette that day, and I never opened that pack of cigarettes, or smoked another tobacco cigarette again. Since that time my lung function has greatly improved, and my sense of taste and smell has returned. I am able to perform daily tasks without feeling out of breath, and I sleep soundly.

It is easy to distinguish the differences between someone who smokes a tobacco cigarette from an electronic cigarette user, the most notable difference is the smell of tobacco smoke which is apparent from some yards away. It is easy to recognize an individual lighting a cigarette, and flicking ashes from their cigarette.

The vapor from an electronic cigarette is virtually odorless. Any odor that could be noticed is not unpleasant, and does not smell like smoke. E cigarette users do not need a flame to use them, and they leave no ashes or butts behind. Because electronic cigarettes lack any of these telltale signs of use, enforcing a ban on their use indoors would be nearly impossible to do.

When I use my electronic cigarette in public, people around me are not dismayed or disgusted by my behavior. Most individuals are not even aware of what I am doing. Those that are aware are curious, and I am happy to answer their questions. Various public establishments I have visited have found no issue with my use of an electronic cigarette, and are aware of the devices and how they are used.

The use of electronic cigarettes in public actually helps smokers to learn about reduced harm products. Curiosity about e cigarettes and first hand demonstrations of their use helps to educate smokers and encourages them to use a safer alternative.

The sales of electronic cigarettes has grown exponentially in recent years. This growth is a testament to their efficacy as a method of tobacco harm reduction. As with any business, if a product does not work, it will not sell. If a product works well such as electronic cigarettes

do, it sells incredibly well.

Like myself, once smokers try electronic cigarettes, they find that they no longer have to suffer the damage wrought on their bodies by smoking cigarettes. I have not smoked a cigarette in two years, after trying many ways to quit for many years. Over the counter and prescribed smoking cessation products were unsuccessful in helping me to quit smoking, and still left me with a desire to smoke. Electronic cigarettes eliminated my desire to smoke in just one day. I urge the members of the joint committee on public health to recognize the benefits that electronic cigarettes offer to the improvement of the public's health, and to maintain the ability of electronic cigarettes to be used as they have been