



Middlesex County Substance Abuse Action Council

A Council of the Business Industry Foundation of Middlesex County
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TESTIMONY OF Middlesex School Superintendents Association Middlesex County, Connecticut

IN FAVOR OF **SB 24- AN ACT CONCERNING THE GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING ELECTRONIC NICOTINE SYSTEMS AND YOUTH SMOKING PREVENTION** Children's Committee Public Hearing, Feb. 27, 2014

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban and Members of the Children's Committee, my name is Lorenzo Marshall and I am a staff member of the Middlesex County Substance Abuse Action Council, or MCSAAC. I come before you today on behalf of the eleven public school superintendents of Middlesex County. The superintendents are very concerned about the thousands of youth in our county who presently have easy, legal access to nicotine through electronic cigarettes. All eleven superintendents have affixed their names to this testimony.

We are strongly in favor of **Senate Bill 24 - An Act Concerning the Governor's Recommendations Regarding Electronic Nicotine Systems and Youth Smoking Prevention**. At present, there are no Federal or Connecticut restrictions preventing youth from obtaining e-cigarettes, and e-cigarettes are available in fruit and candy flavors – including fruit punch, bubble gum, gummy bear, and chocolate – that appeal to adolescents and have been banned from regular cigarettes. E-cigarette cartridges typically contain a strong dose of nicotine, an aerosol component (propylene glycol), and flavorings such as a fruit, mint, or chocolate.

While lobbyists for the e-cigarette industry claim that "vaping" (use of e-cigarettes) is a good way to quit tobacco smoking, virtually all of their advertisements prove otherwise. The ads portray glamorous young women "vaping" to avoid bad breath and smelly hair, while virile looking young men are encouraged to "take back your freedom" and use e-cigarettes anywhere and everywhere.

According to the latest published survey published the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, among all students in grades 6–12, kids trying and/or actively using e-cigarettes more than doubled between 2011 and 2012. In that same survey, 1 in 5 middle school students who had never touched a “real” cigarette reported that they had tried an electronic version.

More and more stores in Connecticut are carrying e-cigarettes and related paraphernalia. One retailer has a large storefront on Main Street in Middletown, for example. Combined with marketing on the Internet, television, print media and billboards, the pressure and opportunity to use e-cigarettes will become enormous.

At least 27 states, including New York and New Jersey, have prohibited the sale of electronic cigarettes or vaping/alternative tobacco products to minors and others have similar proposals (National Conference of State Legislatures). Recently, Attorney General Jepsen was one of the attorneys general from 40 different states and territories that co-signed a letter asking the Food & Drug Administration to regulate e-cigarette sales at a federal level last year. But we should not have to wait for the federal government to act. We support the Governor’s proposal to prevent any type of smoking for those under eighteen.

The school superintendents of Middlesex County, Connecticut urge you to pass Senate Bill 24 and prohibit the sale of electronic cigarettes to minors.

Dr. Patricia Charles (Middletown)

Ms. Patricia Ciccone (Westbrook)

Mr. Jack Cross (Clinton)

Dr. Sally Doyen (Portland)

Ms. Diane Dugas (East Hampton)

Dr. Mary Beth Iacobelli (East Haddam)

Dr. Ruth Levy (Essex, Chester & Deep River)

Ms. Jan Perruccio (Old Saybrook)

Dr. Paula Talty (Cromwell)

Mr. Howard Thiery (Haddam & Killingworth)

Dr. Kathryn Veronesi (Durham & Middlefield)