



**TESTIMONY OF Ingrid Gillespie,
President, Connecticut Prevention Network**

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 Ingrid Gillespie and I serve as President of the Connecticut Prevention Network and the Regional Action Council Director of the Lower Fairfield County Regional Action Council. The Ct Prevention Network is made up of the thirteen regional action councils, which combined cover the entire state of Connecticut and work to provide every community with education, training, and advocacy for substance abuse prevention and related community concerns such as behavioral health issues, violence, teen pregnancy, drunk driving, sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS and suicide.

I am here today to testify 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 bubble gum, gummy bear and chocolate – that appeal to adolescents and have been banned from cigarettes. E-cigarette cartridges typically contain nicotine, a component to produce the aerosol (e.g., propylene glycol or glycerol), and flavorings such as a fruit, mint, or chocolate. Potentially harmful constituents also have been documented in some e-cigarette cartridges, including irritants, genotoxins, and animal carcinogens.

According to a survey published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, from 2011–2012, among all students in grades 6–12 ever e-cigarette use increased from 3.3% to 6.8%. And in that same survey, 1 in 5 middle school students who've tried one say they've never smoked a "real" cigarette.

Nicotine, which is contained in e-cigarettes is an addictive drug. Research on brain development has indicated that adolescents are more vulnerable than any other age group to addictions including nicotine because the regions of the brain that govern impulse and motivation are not yet fully formed.

Ninety percent of all substance addictions begin in the teen years. Therefore, in the absence of regulations regarding sales to minors, e-cigarettes may promote nicotine addiction among our youth.

Stores that have opened in Connecticut that market the products and sell electronic cigarettes across the state will likely lead to more youth trying these products. There are known stores that focus on selling electronic cigarettes and vapors in Branford, Danbury, Milford, East Haven, Enfield, Trumbull and a prevalence of marketing on the Internet, television, print or billboards on our highways. Even well-intentioned sellers who check identification cannot stop kids who are able to purchase e-cigarettes online without restriction.

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 Connecticut Prevention Network urges you to pass Senate Bill 24 and prohibit the sale of electronic cigarettes to minors.