



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

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Public Health Committee Public Hearing Testimony February 23, 2015

*Testimony In Support Of Proposed House Bill 5219 –
An Act Prohibiting The Use of Electronic Cigarettes In Schools*

Good morning Co-Chairs Senator Gerratana & Representative Ritter, Vice Chairs Senator Crisco & Representative Riley, Ranking Members Senator Markley & Representative Srinivasan, and the esteemed members of the Committee.

My name is Devin Carney and I am the State Representative for the 23rd District which encompasses Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, and coastal Westbrook. I am here today to testify in support of proposed House Bill 5219 – An Act Prohibiting The Use of Electronic Cigarettes In Schools.

Current Connecticut law prohibits smoking traditional tobacco cigarettes on school grounds, this proposal would add electronic cigarettes to that law. Similar laws have been passed in states such as Vermont, New Hampshire, and Arkansas and also amongst some of our local school districts including Old Saybrook and Region 18 (Lyme/Old Lyme). I believe that Connecticut should be next in ensuring electronic cigarettes are banned on all school grounds, which includes, but doesn't necessarily have to be limited to, schools with children through the age of 18 (daycare/pre-kindergarten through high school).

According to a recent Yale study, 25.2% of Connecticut high school students have tried an electronic cigarette and, more alarming, 26.4% of middle school students, who have never tried an electronic cigarette, say they would consider trying one in the future.¹ This could possibly be because of the flavors

¹ Suchitra Krishan-Sarn PhD, M. E. M. P. D. R. C. M. D. A. C. P. G. K. P., 2014. E-Cigarette Use Among High School and Middle School Adolescents in Connecticut. *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, pp. 1-9.

offered, which include chocolate, vanilla, cherry, and Coca-Cola. The study also indicates that most middle and high school students who have tried electronic cigarettes have acquired them from friends. It is very easy to pass electronic cigarettes within a school setting and even smoke them on school grounds without being caught since the product is relatively odorless.

E-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is addictive, and also formaldehyde-containing chemical compounds, which can cause cancer. In addition, a newfound use for electronic cigarettes is to load a vapor pen with cannabis oil, which causes a hallucinogenic response. A recent New York Times article highlighted both the growing trend of do-it-yourself electronic joints and a popular product sold in Washington state, the JuJu Joint, which contains 100mg of THC – twice that of a traditional marijuana joint.²

It seems that the electronic cigarette market is moving rapidly and coming out with new ways to use them. They are easy to hide and there is not a huge threat to be caught smoking in the bathroom due to the lack of any strong odors. The addictive and potentially carcinogenic chemicals in electronic cigarettes have no place on our school grounds, especially as we try hard every day to prevent drug and alcohol use amongst our youth. The addition of marijuana into the mix only makes this law even more necessary. Therefore, I believe it is imperative we act as early as possible in ensuring the safety and health of our youth and I urge the Committee to support HB 5219.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Devin Carney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Devin Carney
23rd District
Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, Westbrook

² Peikoff, K., 2015. No Smoke, but Haze Around E-Joint. The New York Times, 12 January, p. D3.