



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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Wednesday, March 11, 2015

Public Health Committee Public Hearing Testimony on HB 6290

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Senator Markley, Representative Srinivasan, and Members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Tim Ackert and I represent the 8th District which includes Columbia, Coventry, Vernon and Tolland. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to speak in support of House Bill 6290.

HB 6290: AN ACT LIMITING THE ADVERTISING OF ELECTRONIC NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEMS.

E-cigarette ads are found in all forms of media; the internet, magazines, newspapers – even TV and radio where “traditional” cigarette ads were banned over 40 years ago. In the past 3 years alone, the amount of advertising dollars spent on e-cigarette ads increased 1,200 percent. The most alarming problem with this is that a substantial portion of these ads are airing on networks and during programs with a large amount of youth viewers. Manufacturers are also promoting their products using media that is characteristically dominated by youth and young adult demographics – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and also sports, music and cultural events.

These tactics are not exactly original, in many cases these are concepts previously used by tobacco companies to market traditional cigarettes to a much younger audience. Impressionable youth viewers are targeted by messages that convey rebelliousness, glamour, sex appeal, and a desire to be “cool”. Some brands have taken the position that their products should not be sold or marketed to youth, however most marketing candy coats the message with a notion that they’re safe and failing to mention the highly addictive nature of the product – calling the nicotine containing e-liquid “e-juice” and selling it in a variety of flavors including: cotton candy, gummy bear, chocolate mint, watermelon, etc.

I urge the committee to support this bill, for fear if not, a new generation of young people will become addicted to nicotine, tragic accidental poisoning of children will continue and decades of tobacco/cigarette use prevention will erode as we re-normalize the smoking culture.