



State of Connecticut
House Of Representatives

Representative Cristin McCarthy Vahey
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Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 7200
AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE OF CIGARETTES, TOBACCO PRODUCTS,
ELECTRONIC NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND VAPOR PRODUCTS TO
PERSONS UNDER AGE TWENTY-ONE

Dear Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg, Senator Somers, Representative Petit, and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee,

As I shared with the Children's Committee, my Grandfather, Fred McCarthy, died of emphysema when I was a teenager. I never saw him smoke. He had quit long before his death, but I did watch him struggle to breathe, suffer and succumb to the deadly effects of a nicotine addiction. I'd bet my life that my Grandfather did not begin smoking as a middle aged Dad with multiple children. I am here so that our children do not suffer and die like my Grandfather did.

I ask for your support for HB 7200, which will raise the age of tobacco purchase to 21 for all tobacco, electronic nicotine delivery and vaping.

The last time I was before you on this issue, the committee and the general public as a whole were not aware of the significant increases in tobacco use, particularly vaping, among teens. You'll hear a number of facts today, but I will remind you of a few:

- Tobacco remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease in our country and, as with my Grandfather, most tobacco addiction begins in adolescence.
- Progress in lowering teen smoking has been erased due to the increases in vaping
- The CT State Department of Education school discipline study showed that, "In the past two years there has been a 65% increase in coded incidents (drugs, alcohol, tobacco). The increase is attributed to ENDS (Electronic Nicotine Delivery System)... The use of ENDS was first reported in the 2015-16 school year. Prior to that, no cases had been reported to CSDE. From 2015-16 to 2016-17 the use of ENDS doubled, while tobacco use decreased. In 2017-18, the use of ENDS more than tripled from 2016-17."
- 59% of students who use electronic cigarettes reported getting them from a friend
- As of 2018, all major tobacco manufacturers have entered the Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS) market

Vice Admiral Jerome Adams, our Surgeon General, couldn't be here today, so I will just a few words from his recent Advisory on E-Cigarette Use Among Youth:

I, Surgeon General of the United States Public Health Service, VADM Jerome Adams, am emphasizing the importance of protecting our children from a lifetime of nicotine addiction and associated health risks by immediately addressing the epidemic of youth e-cigarette use. The recent surge in e-cigarette use among youth, which has been fueled by new types of e-cigarettes that have recently entered the market, is a cause for great concern. We must take action now to protect the health of our nation's young people.

KNOW THE RISKS. TAKE ACTION. PROTECT OUR KIDS.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 7200.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cristin McCarthy Vahey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cristin McCarthy Vahey