

Public Health Committee

Public Hearing – February 8, 2021

SB 326 AA Prohibiting The Sale Of Flavored Cigarettes, Tobacco Products, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems and Vapor Products

Maureen Boyle-Henninger

My name is Maureen Boyle-Henninger and I am a resident of West Hartford, CT. I would like to thank the leadership and members of the Public Health Committee for providing me with the opportunity to express my support for SB 326, which would prohibit the sale of all flavors, in all tobacco products, in all CT locations.

I am the middle of 5 children, born in a time when my Mother smoked profusely. 2 of my siblings were avid smokers, and sadly, now 2 of my adopted children are. My Mom's smoking had a profound effect on my life, not only in causing physical issues with me, but also in opening the door for me to become a teen smoker myself. In addition to the physical side effects, I also had to learn how to quit and break a habit so deep. It was one of the hardest things I've had to do. I also have heart issues, a left bundle branch block. I know firsthand the dangers of smoke and the lifelong implications. I am now working with my adult children to help them understand the very real and long-standing results of vaping and smoking, and I am keenly aware of how hard it will now be for them to quit.

Heart disease is the # 1 cause of death in Connecticut, and **smoking** is a leading risk factor for **heart disease**. With 480,000 state residents, or 18.4% of the adult population used some form of tobacco on one or more of the past thirty days, and an estimated 4,900 adults die in CT each year because of their own smoking. In CT, 900 kids under the age of 18 become new daily smokers each year.² 56,000 kids who are now under the age of 18 and alive in CT will ultimately die prematurely from smoking.

Although tobacco companies claim to be responding to adult tobacco users' demand for variety, flavored tobacco products play a key role in enticing new users, particularly kids, to a lifetime of addiction. This growing market for flavored tobacco products is undermining the nation's overall progress in reducing youth tobacco use. Using data from the 1999-2013 Youth Tobacco Surveys, a 2017 study analyzed the impact of the 2009 ban on characterizing flavors in cigarettes on youth tobacco use. The researchers found that cigarette use declined significantly after the ban, whereas cigar and pipe tobacco use significantly increased. Further, use of menthol cigarettes, the only remaining flavored cigarette, increased significantly after the ban.

According to FDA's Tobacco Product Scientific Advisory Committee (TPSAC): Menthol cigarettes increase the number of children who experiment with cigarettes and the number of children who become regular smokers, increasing overall youth smoking. Young people who initiate using menthol cigarettes are more likely to become addicted and become long-term daily

smokers. The availability of menthol cigarettes reduces smoking cessation, especially among African Americans, and increases the overall prevalence of smoking among African Americans.

When you consider that the parts of the brain most responsible for decision making, impulse control, sensation seeking and susceptibility to peer pressure continue to develop and change through young adulthood and adolescent brains are uniquely vulnerable to the effects of nicotine and nicotine addiction, it is no wonder that young smokers become lifetime smokers.

As the parent of 3 children, all of whom vape and have smoked cigarettes, I would hope our legislature would put a greater value on our children and their futures. I respectfully request your support for this important bill not only for the health of our children, but the health of the future of our state. It is the responsible thing to do.

Thank you for your consideration.

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