

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

Pareesa Charmchi Goodwin, Executive Director
The Connecticut Oral Health Initiative, Inc.

Distinguished Members of the Public Health Committee,

Thank you for raising this important issue and providing the opportunity to comment **in support of SB 326, An Act Prohibiting the Sale of Flavored Cigarettes, Tobacco Products, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems and Vapor Products**. I am Pareesa Charmchi Goodwin, the Executive Director of the Connecticut Oral Health Initiative (COHI).

COHI is a non-profit that advocates for protecting and improving oral health across the state of Connecticut. We support this proposal because flavored tobacco products harm health, including oral health. Flavored tobacco products target and appeal to youth. Prohibiting the sale of these products in Connecticut protects our kids.

Many smokers, including family members and loved ones of mine, began smoking at a young age and were initiated with fruit and mint flavored cigarettes, which were more palatable and seemed less harsh. For some, this has become a life-long addiction and has had adverse impacts on their health, including their gums and teeth.

Smoking is a common cause of gum (periodontal) disease that can lead to bleeding gums, painful chewing, and bone, tissue, and tooth loss.ⁱ Periodontal disease is life-long, requires regular management and more expensive care than a routine dental visit, and can impact perinatal health.ⁱⁱ

It is critical that all flavors, including menthol flavored cigarettes, remain in this bill. The Food and Drug Administration found menthol flavoring led to increased smoking initiation among youth, greater addiction, and decreased success in quitting smoking.ⁱⁱⁱ

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and voice our support for this legislation.

Respectfully,

Pareesa Charmchi Goodwin, MPH

Executive Director

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ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Smoking, Gum Disease, and Tooth Loss.

<https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/diseases/periodontal-gum-disease.html>

ⁱⁱ Connecticut Department of Public Health. Oral Health and Perinatal Health: Make the Connection.

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DPH/dph/oral_health/PDF/DPH-Oral-and-Perinatal-Health-Card_v7.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ FDA. Preliminary Scientific Evaluation of the Possible Public Health Effects of Menthol versus Nonmenthol Cigarettes (2013).