

Donna Fortier

My name is Donna Fortier and I am here to protest the ban on flavored e-liquid. I was addicted to cigarette for most of my adult life. Like most other smokers, I eventually developed chronic bronchitis and desperately want to quit. I tried repeatedly to quit smoking. I tried cold turkey, I tried nicotine gum, I tried nicotine patches, I tried hypnosis and a prescription for from my doctor to no avail. It wasn't until someone introduced me to vaping flavors, that I was able to get off of tobacco. Within weeks, my breathing became better, I felt better and did not have the horrible withdrawal from nicotine. I have not had bronchitis once since switching to vaping. And I'm not alone. Millions of people have been able to stop smoking cigarettes, by switching to the better choice of vaping a flavor that does not taste like the tobacco one is trying to quit.

I would add, we are in the middle of a pandemic of a virus that causes terrible respiratory illness. To take flavored vaping away from people will have the consequence of them starting to smoke cigarettes again.

I am totally, 100% against our young people getting hooked on vaping, but to ban flavors for the millions of people who use vaping to stop smoking cigarettes seems like public health going in the wrong direction. Why would we purposely cause adults to start smoking cigarettes by banning flavored e-liquids?

But I will ask you: do you know that the reason underage young people were so attracted to vaping products in the first place? It has to do with the slick marketing campaign of a large corporation called JUUL that was eventually purchased by a big tobacco company. JUUL's marketing purposefully targeted young people and moved their products into small gas stations and convenience stores, making it easy for young people to purchase these disposable devices in many flavors and thus start vaping. Small vape shops don't have large marketing and advertising dollars and they were not involved in the push of vaping on our young people. Small vape shops are the place where millions of people like me go to finally get help to quit smoking cigarettes through flavored e-liquid.

I want to point out there are many studies which show vaping as a much better alternative to smoking cigarettes and as a successful way to quit altogether. The Cancer Research of UK advises people to use vaping as an alternative to smoking. It's research shows there are 5,000 chemicals in cigarette smoke of which 70 are known to cause cancer. Their study determined e-liquids absence of chemicals make vaping 97% safer than smoking cigarettes.

Link to study:

<https://scienceblog.cancerresearchuk.org/2017/02/06/new-study-comes-the-closest-yet-to-proving-that-e-cigarettes-arent-as-dangerous-as-smoking/>

The Royal College of Physicians in Canada has determined vaping is 95% less dangerous than smoking cigarettes.

Link to study:

<https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2020/02/06/1980703/0/en/Research-supports-vaping-as-at-least-95-less-harmful-than-smoking.html>

I urge you not to ban flavors for the millions of adults, many like me who grew up in the 70's where smoking was cool and unfortunately got hooked on cigarettes and were unable to quit until we were able to purchase flavored e-liquids at our local vape shop.

I urge you to work *with* the vape shops, who already work diligently to ID customers and not sell to minors, to help get more people to stop smoking cigarettes, a known death sentence, through vaping flavored e-liquid.

We, as a society, have made no efforts to completely ban cigarettes, a without a doubt, known cancer causing product, yet we are going to take away the one product, flavored e-liquid, that helps so many stop smoking.