



February 1, 2021

Co-Chair Mary Daugherty Abrams
Co-Chair Jonathan Steinberg
Senator Heather Somers
Senator Tony Hwang
Representative William Petit

Public Health Committee:

We are submitting testimony on S.B. 326, AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE OF FLAVORED CIGARETTES, TOBACCO PRODUCTS, ELECTRONIC NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND VAPOR PRODUCTS.

The Connecticut Energy Marketers Association (CEMA) represents local gasoline distributors in Connecticut who own, operate and distribute fuel to over 1,000 convenience stores in our state.

Our members are 100% supportive of the goal to eliminate underage smoking. We are on the front line every day at our convenience stores where tobacco products are sold and we work hard to do it lawfully.

We train our employees and implement age verification methods to ensure that the only people who purchase these products are of legal age. Our association endorses, and the vast majority of our members voluntarily participate in the "We Card" (<https://www.wecard.org/>) program which is designed to help train employees to comply with federal, state and local laws on preventing age-restricted product sales to minors. The local businesses we represent utilize We Card's ongoing efforts to raise awareness of responsible retailing and age verification requirements and to educate and train retail employees to identify and prevent underage attempts to purchase age-restricted products.

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We Card Training
THRU 3-31-20



- ✓ Preventing Illegal Sales to Underage Customers
- ✓ Denying Adult-for-Underage Person Purchases

wecard.org/thepledge

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Our members are not expert in public health issues, but we do support the sale of legal products to adults. Since Connecticut has deemed that tobacco products are legal to purchase by people who are 21 and over, we believe that flavored products like menthol should also be available for purchase.

We believe that making children, parents, and retailers more aware of the issues surrounding nicotine use by minors is an approach that makes the most sense. We can stop minors from using these products if we work together. Banning them will only drive our youth to places where we have no control. A ban at legitimate regulated retail locations will likely driver underage people street or the black market to obtain them.

Allowing flavors to be sold at our locations is the best line of defense from underage purchase of nicotine products.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris G. H. B.".

Christian A. Herb
President