

**Melissa McGarry
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SUPPORT for Senate Bill 326

AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE OF FLAVORED CIGARETTES, TOBACCO PRODUCTS, ELECTRONIC NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND VAPOR PRODUCTS.

Dear Members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Melissa McGarry and I am from Westport. I support SB 326 that would ban the sale of flavored tobacco products, including vapes.

As the mother of three teens, I have seen firsthand how popular flavored vaping products are with our young people. Many of these kids started with the mango and fruit medley flavored JUULS. When these were banned, kids didn't quit vaping; they moved over to the still-legal disposable vapes like Puff Bar. Currently you can buy Puff Bar in kid-friendly flavors like Pink Lemonade, Strawberry Banana, and O.M.G. (Orange Mango Grapefruit). They're cheap and readily available at convenience stores and gas stations all over Connecticut.

These products have been designed to make our kids dependent on nicotine – each Puff Bar contains as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes or more. Teens I know have told me they felt hooked on the products after only two weeks of use. Those who have tried to quite reported being ill. Students are caught vaping at school because they're addicted, and can't get through the day without nicotine. All of the kids I have spoken to started with flavored vape products.

We have decades of data to show that tobacco use is dangerous to our health. We know that nicotine is one of the most addictive substances there is, and that young people who start using early often struggle their whole lives. With vapes, we have an additional layer of risk. We can't yet quantify the long-term health risks of exposing young lungs and brains to the chemicals in these flavored vaping products. In fact, when it comes to these products, our kids are the lab rats.

We have an opportunity to protect young people in Connecticut from the dangers of these flavored products. I urge you to vote **YES** on SB 326.

Sincerely,

Melissa McGarry