

SB 326:

An Act Prohibiting the Sale of Flavored Cigarettes, Tobacco Products, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems and Vapor Products.

My name is Susan Myers, I am a resident of West Hartford, CT and I appreciate the opportunity to share my testimony with you.

The title of this Bill is broad/all encompassing, because it NEEDS to be. We can not allow any loophole for the Tobacco Industry to circumvent. The reality is that ALL tobacco is bad for our health.

Given all that we have learned about the significant negative health issues resulting from the use of tobacco in ANY form, it is unbelievable to me that we continue to fight the Tobacco Industry as they continue to find ways to expand their market. In the course of doing so, the Tobacco Industry assures that more people become addicted to nicotine, while impacting lung health, which far too often results in the diagnoses of lung cancer. The Tobacco Industry does NOT care about the cost of treatment for lung cancer, nor the loss of life from lung cancer.

Our children are the ultimate targets for BIG Tobacco. I find that to be unconscionable corporate behavior! The fact that we have to legislate to correct the bad behavior is sad, but necessary.

The Tobacco Industry counts on kids engaging kids, the basics of peer pressure. It's a marketing approach the Tobacco Industry has employed successfully for years,whether it be:

“I light up a cigarette, 'cuz it's cool to be like the older kids”

or, "the menthol cigarettes cool my throat, they don't burn my throat like the regular cigarettesdo”

or, “I got into vapes, 'cuz don't smell like cigarettes, but I still get a buzz”,

or "this tastes like mango it can't be bad for me, it tastes good”.

As a mother and an aunt, I have first hand experience with high-school aged family becoming addicted to cigarettes, because older siblings of friends made it available. I have first hand experience with other high-school aged family members who started vaping, as it was cool to do what

others were doing and they shared that they didn't smell like cigarettes. Each of these young adults have heard from me about the dangers of tobacco, but peer pressure is greater force than a mother or aunt's reason.

We DO need to intercede. From a health care perspective, taking action in passing this legislation puts the lives of our children ahead of the profits of the Tobacco Industry. As for sales of tobacco products in stores, it's an opportunity for stores to find healthier options. Taking tobacco, in any form, out of our lives provides the promise of greater health, with health not compromised by tobacco.