

Testimony in support for:

**S.B. NO. 326 (RAISED) AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE OF FLAVORED CIGARETTES, TOBACCO PRODUCTS, ELECTRONIC NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND VAPOR PRODUCTS.**

Submitted by:

Dara Richards, MD  
Chief Medical Officer and Pediatrician  
Southwest Community Health Center  
46 Albion Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06605

Monday, February 1, 2021

To: Members of the Public Health Committee

I strongly support S.B. NO. 326 AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE OF FLAVORED CIGARETTES, TOBACCO PRODUCTS, ELECTRONIC NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND VAPOR PRODUCTS.

As a pediatrician at Southwest Community Health Center in Bridgeport, I am concerned about the targeted marketing of these products to youth and the use of flavors to lure children into developing unhealthy habits. Children should be able to reach their fullest health potential without any influence to initiate or continue tobacco use. Exposure to these products increases the risk for nicotine addiction, addiction to other drugs, and long-term, health effects from tobacco exposure and associated illnesses. There is also the risk for harm to adolescent brain development, particularly the parts responsible for memory, attention and learning.

I am also concerned about the impact of these flavored products in racial and ethnic minority communities, such as the one served by my health center in Bridgeport. African Americans and Hispanics, historically targeted for the sale of flavored, more addictive, tobacco products, are disproportionately affected by the ill effects. They are more likely to die from smoking than whites, more likely to suffer from tobacco-related illnesses, and more likely to die from COVID-19 due to having a tobacco-related illness.

The time to act is now. I urge the committee to pass this bill to prohibit the sale of ALL flavored, tobacco products. We must take action to protect our children and achieve health equity in tobacco prevention and control for all.