

Public Health Committee
Public Hearing – February 8, 2021
**SB 326 AA Prohibiting The Sale Of Flavored Cigarettes, Tobacco Products, Electronic
Nicotine Delivery Systems and Vapor Products**

To the Honorable Members of the Public Health Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 326 concerning a full ban on tobacco flavors. As you probably know the federal ban applied only to specific flavors and specific products. The exclusion of menthol and the inevitable response of the tobacco companies to develop and market new products not subject to the ban to reintroduce even more flavors warrants passage of this important legislation.

Menthol in particular doesn't sound all that enticing since it calls to mind having a head cold. But that same soothing comfort that we need when ill prevents smokers from experiencing the typical immediate ill effects of smoking. Adults can manage those effects without menthol. But imagine how much easier it is for a young person to start smoking and have the impact blunted by that flavor and soothing comfort. It is much more enticing to try it again and before they realize what has happened, they are hooked.

When I was 16 years old, I vividly remember visiting my Uncle John in the hospital when he was terminally ill with lung cancer. He was on oxygen and barely able to breath. He was in his early 50's and started smoking at young age. They told him he couldn't smoke any more, but he said it didn't matter if he stopped now. He had wanted to quit but was never able to do so. He said the best approach was not to start. In spite of this horrible family history, my sister and two nieces all tried smoking with the youngest struggling to quit. If these flavors had been available to them when they were young, they too could still be smoking.

Smoking is also a leading cause of heart disease and many other diseases. That is why every medical history form asks about smoking, do you smoke now or have you ever smoked. A co-worked of mine who had quit smoking 8-10 years prior nevertheless developed lung and breast cancer and died in her 40's. Smoking is truly insidious.

The cost of treatment of tobacco related illnesses is exponential as are the costs spent on trying to help those who are addicted quit. The newer methods of ingesting nicotine and other carcinogens will no doubt create novel ways to sicken people at an expense that is yet to be known.

The flavor ban on all products in all locations and all delivery methods is essential to protecting Connecticut residents young and old. Please give this legislation your careful consideration and your full support.

Sincerely,

Catherine Lester Salchert, Avon, CT