

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

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I would like to thank the leadership and members of the Public Health Committee for providing me with the opportunity to express my support for SB 326, which would prohibit the sale of all flavors, in all tobacco products, in all CT locations. My name is Sofia Segura-Perez and I am the Director of Community Nutrition at the Hispanic Health Council (HHC), a non-profit organization with its mission is “To improve the health and social well-being of Latinos and other diverse communities”. Thus, on behalf of the HHC, we strongly support this bill since all tobacco products are negatively impacting the health of our young population especially among minority groups.

According to the CDC more than 16 million Americans are currently living with a health problem due to smoking. Smoking leads to an array of diseases such as cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung disease, diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), it also increases the risk of other diseases such as tuberculosis. In United States (US) smoking is killing more than 480,000 people each yearⁱ. Smoking during childhood and teenage years is especially harmful, since it damages the lungs, which increases children’s risk of developing COPD in adulthood. In 2019, 31.8% of high school students were using a tobacco product, with 27.6% of them using e-cigarettes. It is estimated that if the current rate of smoking continues among youth, 5.8 million of them will die early due to a smoking related illness. However, one marketing strategy that the Tobacco industry have used and that it has especially appealed to youth, it is flavoring tobacco products. For instance, the use of menthol products, which makes up 35% of the U.S. cigarette market, have been very popular among children, data shows that in 2018, menthol cigarettes were used by 54% of the children between 12 and 17 years old. This flavor is also very popular among current smokers older than 12 years, being the highest users African American with 85% of them using it, followed by 37% of Hispanics, compared with only 29% of Whitesⁱⁱ

This bill will help to reduce the use of tobacco use and its negative and very harmful health effects among all populations, but especially among minority youths.

Sincerely,

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ⁱ CDC Health Effects of Cigarette Smoking.

https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/health_effects/effects_cig_smoking/

ⁱⁱ CDC Youth Tobacco Use.

https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/index.htm