

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

To the CT Public Health Committee,

I am deeply saddened I am not able to testify live and exemplify my profound passion and support for the passing of S.B No. 326. My name is Dylan Ayer and I am 17 years old. I am a senior at the Morgan School in Clinton Connecticut and I work for the Clinton Human Services Department in the mental health and substance abuse prevention sector. Being a student in a high school, I see the direct exchange of vape products constantly. Students go above and beyond to trade Juul pod flavors in the bathroom, classroom, lunchroom, and even on the bleachers. During my time at Morgan, I have walked into 7 vape product/other drug exchanges. This is not even counting the countless times I have walked into or seen kids using vape products in a school or public setting. Vape and tobacco products are a serious issue for students around the world. Thus, I am in support of a bill that will help decrease the number of students who use and to further eliminate this problem.

Being a high school student myself, I see that kids are incredibly eager to be using for numerous reasons. The flavored products are what specifically entice kids to continue their use. Therefore, we must eliminate them. The 2016 Surgeon General Report indicates that flavored e-cigarettes are the most popular and effective method to ensure kids are using tobacco and nicotine products. In 2020, NYTS reported that the percentage of kids using vape products increased from 68.8% to 82.9% because of a massive expansion in the purchase of flavored vape products. In fact, the FDA details that 97% of students who use, only use flavored tobacco products. This is not only an issue for high school students. Tobaccofreekids.org states that in 2019 use of e-cigarettes increased by 400% among middle school students, specifically 3.0% to 15.2% because of flavored products. All of these statistics are overwhelming. They prove that the majority of kids are using these menacing products because of the flavors. If we want to stop student-use we must ban these flavors.

Through research and first-hand account, I have seen that these companies are able to attract kids 10 and over because of their manipulative marketing strategies. These threatening products are created to look kid-friendly through fonts, pictures, and colors that appear safe for kids to use. Although, these products are not safe to use and even dangerous. The General Surgeon reports that flavored nicotine products could lead to numerous health risks for children. Accordingly, some flavored e-cigarette products have shown to lead to severe lung damage and lung diseases. Why would we ever want to allow the consumption and selling of products that could cause health risks and lung cancer? Moreover, if the Juul companies were not allowed to sell flavored products, they would not be able to brand themselves as fun and kid-friendly because the flavors

are what allow them to do so. Consequently, the use of vape, tobacco, and nicotine products would all decrease among students and children because of this. Furthermore, it may even prohibit the future use of other drugs because Flavorshookkdisct.org found that 4 out of 5 kids who have used tobacco began with a flavored product. We need to ban the sale of flavored products that serve as a gateway drug leading to an 80% success rate of usage of marijuana.

The sale of flavored cigarettes, tobacco products, electronic nicotine delivery systems, and vapor products must be prohibited for the health and safety of our children and humanity. As a state, we should try and eliminate the use of these products for the good of children as a whole and eliminating the flavors is a move in the right direction. I support the passing of S.B. No. 326 because of science, health risks, and safety of our children.

Thank you again for your time and consideration,

Dylan Ayer

Monday, February 8, 2021