



Testimony in Support of -A6 amendments to SB 235A

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Chair Greenlick and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support the –A6 amendment to SB 235A. The Oregon Nurses Association is proud to represent nearly 15,000 Oregon nurses who work in nearly every health care setting imaginable from large hospitals to small local clinics, from corrections to school based health centers and community-based public health.

As direct care providers, nurses see firsthand the damages caused by smoking, and are faced with caring for many Oregonians who are suffering chronic illness as a result to tobacco and nicotine use. Consequently, Oregon’s nurses have long been active in Oregon’s tobacco and nicotine prevention and cessation efforts.

Recognizing that most tobacco and nicotine users become addicted at a young age, ONA supports a variety of tobacco and nicotine prevention policies specifically aimed at creating barriers to access, making tobacco and nicotine products less affordable, and eliminating marketing and flavors geared at youth.

A strong tobacco and nicotine licensure policy, like the one crafted in the –A6 amendment, is foundational to ensuring compliance with state and local tobacco and nicotine restrictions and protections that ultimately curb youth access and addiction.

Like with Oregon’s alcohol sales, the –A6 amendment rests on the simple concept that retailers selling tobacco products, including inhalant-form nicotine, must comply with all relevant laws or risk losing the privilege of selling these products. The vast majority of states currently use some sort of tobacco retail licensure policy as an enforcement tool. Without this tool, Oregon consistently leads the nation with high illegal sales rates of tobacco to minors, and topped the list in 2013 as the worst state.¹ We’ve made gradual improvements in this area since that time as counties have begun to implement their own retail licensure policies in lieu of a statewide program. Without a statewide retail licensure structure in place, point of sale tobacco and nicotine control policies are incredibly difficult to enforce, and allow young Oregonians greater access to tobacco and nicotine products.

ONA sees the inclusion of inhalant-form nicotine products in SB 235-A6 as vital to the success of tobacco and nicotine prevention. The World Health Organization recommends regulating e-cigarettes the same way traditional tobacco is regulated, which is why including inhalant-form nicotine products in licensure is key.

¹ Oregon tops charts in illegal tobacco sales to minors; Multnomah County considers action, Multnomah County, November 2014.

Tobacco retail licensure of all tobacco and nicotine products is an important mechanism to ensure responsible retailing and compliance with public health laws. **ONA urges your support of SB 235 with the –A6 amendments.**