

Flavors Hook Oregon Kids HB 3090 Testimony Letter (Short)

Tuesday, March 21, 2023

Dear Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Nelson and Goodwein, and members of the House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care:

I am writing to share Tualatin Together's support of HB 3090, the Preventing Nicotine Addiction bill, which will protect our kids and our communities by ending the sale of all flavored tobacco products in Oregon.

As a youth substance use prevention and youth positive mental health support organization, we see the damage the tobacco industry has done by targeting our youth with flavors and other promotions that favor their early use. We know tobacco products specifically vape products, are something almost everyone who uses becomes addicted to unlike a substance like alcohol. While youth legally cannot purchase either substance, we know through quantitative and qualitative data our youth are using and at higher levels than prior to the pandemic. We see youth as young as 11 years old reaching out for cessation programs that primary prevention organizations such as ours are now needing to offer to ensure our youth get every chance at a healthy, long life as possible.

Our kids are being targeted by Big Tobacco. Our kids are using flavored tobacco. While product names like Cotton Candy and Tutti Fruitti sound harmless, they are very dangerous. Consider the facts

- More than 3 million middle and high school students use tobacco and e-cigarettes.
- 85% of youth e-cigarette users use flavored products.
- Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Oregon, killing over 8,000 Oregonians a year.

Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm adolescent brain development. Taking action now will help protect our kids, prevent serious health impacts and avoid a lifetime of addiction.

Why is this bill necessary, when retailers are already prohibited from selling flavored tobacco to young people under age 21? Because it's not working.

- The Oregon Health Authority recently reported that 25% of Oregon businesses sold tobacco to underage buyers.

Passage of HB 3090, the Preventing Nicotine Addiction Act, will go a long way to protect youth across Oregon from falling into the trap of nicotine addiction and tobacco

and e-cigarette use, as well as the host of serious health consequences associated with their use.

Sincerely,

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