

Submitter: Olympia Calvert

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care

Measure: HB3090

Hello Chair Nosse, Vice Chair Goodwin, Vice Chair Nelson, and members of the committee, I am Olympia Calvert, 16 years old, and a student at Portland Community College. When I was 14 years old and in 8th grade, my best friend and I bought our first vape, a grape Puffbar and we purchased it from a student whose brother was 21. The vape died two days later; it started a pattern for me and my friend of always having access to some form of nicotine. During the pandemic, we would search for people smoking to ask for a cigarette or save our allowance to buy a new vape.

I knew my dependency at such a young age was so dangerous, but what should have scared me even more was seeing nearly ? of my friend group had the same cravings for nicotine.

By age 15, I was at an alternative school in NW Portland. When I craved nicotine, I had to walk to the bathroom or text a friend I knew would have a vape. It was so accessible and fed my and my classmates' addiction.

We would walk up and down the streets during lunch, looking for anyone with a cigarette when none of us had vapes. We would be 45 minutes late to class because we had to find someone with a cigarette and ask them to spare one.

Or even worse, we would search the ground for half-smoked cigarettes to smoke.

We were addicted to nicotine, and none of us could quit for longer than two weeks because it was so available.

I am confident that if flavored nicotine devices were not accessible, I wouldn't have ever smoked a cigarette, let alone become addicted to nicotine.

Imagine if other drugs put so many children at risk of getting addicted. If alcohol were as available as nicotine to our youth, we would treat it as one of the biggest public health threats.

We are allowing our children to grow addicted to vaping because we, as a society, have decided that putting profits ahead of public safety is acceptable. We have allowed these companies to design products that target me in marketing and by creating an extremely addictive product that is flavored to appeal to me.

Thank you for listening to my testimony, and I ask that you support HB 3090