

Submitter: Kassandra Alderman
On Behalf Of: Stop And Go Mini Mart
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure: HB3090

My name is Kassandra and I have been working at Stop and Go Mini Mart for 4 years now and Managing for 2. I myself started smoking non flavored cigarettes' (Marlboro red 100's) at the age of 15 and smoked them for ten years. I was finally able to switch to flavored vapor products 3 years ago and instantly found relief in my breathing and in appreciated the fact that I didn't stink every day. Reasonable regulations to keep tobacco products from getting into kids' hands make sense, but banning the sale of flavored vapor, menthol cigarettes, flavored cigars, and flavored dip for adults is not the right way. It would only create unintended consequences and severely hurt responsible retailers like us. Kids will still get a hold of all these product's by ordering them from china where they are not regulated and we don't know what's being put in them, or they will go to Idaho or Washington for them. I grew up in Washington and I remember making trips to Astoria Oregon from Aberdeen just to buy cigarettes' cheaper and sell them to friends. I respect the fact that your trying to protect our youth but there is so many other methods such as educating in schools and rewarding our children when they make the right decision rather than controlling the population including the adults. Is this not suppose to be a free country where I as an adult can make my own decisions? Its disgusting to me the amount of control you are all reaching for.

Retailers are the first line of defense when it comes to preventing kids from purchasing tobacco products. We take this responsibility very seriously. This proposed ban only serves to limit the product choices of adult customers. And if adult customers cannot buy their preferred products in our stores, they will just go outside of our state to make their purchases. While there, they will also purchase gas, grocery items and beverages. Worse yet, prohibiting these products could shift sales from law-abiding responsible retailers, like us, to potentially illegal sources who don't check IDs.

Our store pays taxes, creates jobs, and supports Oregon's economy. This ban would not only hurt our business, but it could also have devastating effects in our communities. According to the FDA and the CDC, youth cigarette smoking, including those smoking menthol cigarettes, has declined to historic lows. Youth smoking is at 1.6% and declining across all age groups. Banning flavored tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes and flavored vapes, won't end the sale of these products in Oregon. It will simply encourage criminal networks to feed the demand, and will do so without paying taxes, without checking ID, and without following any other rules or regulations.

The current economic crisis has hit Oregonians hard. Convenience stores like mine, that provide the necessities for some neighborhoods – bread, milk, water – are closing. This proposal only unnecessarily compounds this economic hardship.

We know that prohibition does not work. It did not work for alcohol, it did not work for marijuana, and it won't work by banning adult-preferred flavored tobacco products. Moreover, this ban would undermine public health by pushing the sales of these products to the illegal market where criminals don't care about checking IDs or what ingredients are in them. Banning the sale of adult flavored tobacco and nicotine products to adults 21 and older is not good policy for Oregon. We share Oregon's goal that kids should not use tobacco or any nicotine products, but Prohibition is not the answer. Instead, Oregon should focus on better options that don't hurt licensed retailers, like education, cessation support, and underage prevention.