

March 13, 2023

House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care
Oregon State House of Representative



RE: HB 3090, Protecting youth from nicotine addiction

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

I am writing in 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.

I work in youth substance abuse prevention at Northwest Family Services. We support this bill because Northwest Family Services has a variety of programs geared toward improving and supporting youth health, substance use prevention, and intervention programs. As prevention specialists and behavioral health experts, we agree that flavored tobacco products are detrimental to youth and our community.

This past summer, during our Advocacy & Empowerment Summer camp, we took middle and high-school-aged youth to local convenience stores to observe flavored tobacco in stores and reflect on the experience. Overwhelming, the youth reported feeling targeted by advertising, flavors, and product placement. They even stated that they thought younger children would be confused and likely drawn to the flavor of tobacco products.

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 the age of 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.

Please reach out if you have any questions. Thank you for your commitment to protecting youth.

Sincerely,

Michelle Bollinger

mbollinger@nwfs.org

Northwest Family Services
6200 SE King Rd, Portland, OR 97222