

LD 1215: An Act To End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products
Testimony of Bill Nave, Healing Arts at The Haven
April 25, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

My name is Bill Nave and I own Healing Arts at The Haven in Winthrop. I'm also a member of the Tobacco Free Maine Works business coalition. I support LD 1215 because it's an opportunity to meaningfully curb youth tobacco use and stave off tobacco's negative consequences for families, communities, and businesses across the state.

Tobacco use is a leading cause of preventable death and disease in Maine. Most people who use tobacco start at or before they turn 18 years old. A government study found that [81% of youth](#) who have ever used tobacco started with a flavored product [1].

Flavored tobacco's popularity among youth is consistent across product categories. A recent survey also shows that [more than eight in ten](#) current youth e-cigarette users vape flavored products, with fruit, candy and dessert flavored products as some of the most popular [2]. And according to the [Food and Drug Administration](#), "youth smokers are more likely to use menthol cigarettes than any other age group"[3].

Tobacco addiction damages peoples' health and well-being, and it's an unnecessary strain on employers who already struggle to find reliable staff. Every year, smoking costs Maine nearly \$1.5 billion due to associated health care expenses and lost productivity.

I personally support ending the sale of flavored tobacco products in Maine because... My whole career I've worked with students from disadvantaged backgrounds who often had everything going against them. I was their advocate when others passed them over. I coaxed their faltering confidence back to life. Kids are capable of amazing growth given the right encouragement and environment. Allowing flavored tobacco to proliferate among youths is like dousing them in weed killer. Kids from disadvantaged backgrounds are already going through so much in their daily life. They don't need this looming temptation of flavored tobacco to mess up their lives even more.

Just as my business is a haven for those seeking immersion in healing practices such as yoga, we need to do the same for Maine's youth.

Notes:

[1] Ambrose, BK, et al., "Flavored Tobacco Product Use Among US Youth Aged 12-17 Years, 2013-2014," *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, published online 26 October 2015.

[2] Ambrose, BK, et al., "Flavored Tobacco Product Use Among US Youth Aged 12-17 Years, 2013-2014," *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, published online 26 October 2015.

[3] FDA. 2021. "Results from the Annual National Youth Tobacco Survey." FDA, October. <https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/youth-and-tobacco/results-annual-national-youth-tobacco-survey>.

Ending the sale of flavored tobacco products will prioritize kids' health, and that's something my business can get behind.

Please vote ought to pass on LD 1215

Bill Nave,
Owner, Healing Arts at The Haven

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