

In favor of LD 1215 An Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco
Thomas Bartelt
Lamoine

To Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: my name is Thomas Bartelt. I live in Lamoine in Hancock County, and I am writing today to ask you to support LD 1215, An Act To End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products. The health of my family members has been impacted by smoking and nicotine use, so I have a personal connection to this, but it's also kind of a no-brainer to restrict access to products designed specifically to addict young people to nicotine.

Both my parents started smoking at a young age- the tobacco companies got them hooked as kids- smoked for most of their lives, and were so addicted that even staring the possibility of death in the face almost didn't get them to quit. My father had a heart attack and then cancer. They basically resisted quitting until the last possible moment. If my parents hadn't started smoking when they were young, they probably wouldn't have started at all (95% of people start smoking before their mid-20s).

Flavored tobacco disproportionately impacts youth and other vulnerable communities, including the rural communities of most of our state. Tobacco companies market these flavors to young people to get them to try a product that contains a highly addictive substance; many of them do get addicted, and when they get addicted, whether as kids or adults, there's not much choice involved there. This IS about the free will of people- it's about the tobacco companies taking that away from them.

Please vote to end the sale of flavored tobacco products by voting yes on LD 1215. You can make a difference and help to prevent other families from experiencing what we went through.

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