

April 17, 2023

Testimony for LD 1215 An Act To End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products

Hello Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Join Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Dio Sabushimike, and I am a ____ in ____ Maine. I am writing today in favor of LD 1215, An Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products.

As someone who grew up in Iowa in a very rural town and eventually transitioned to Maine, trying to trace back my steps of how I got addicted to vaping is hard. The only sensible explanation I have is that I was bored at the time and I was looking for something new to do as any teenager would be. Getting the product was simple for me, one day I was hanging out with a group of friends and one of them just handed me a device and asked if I wanted to take a hit. As soon as I picked it up it was like I could never turn back. I realize it was an impulsive and stupid decision but it was easy so unfortunately I fell into what would be a horrible addiction. I realized that I got addicted at a young age and it just became a regular day to day thing. I also realized that I did not experience anxiety on a normal basis until I started to continuously use these products.

Nothing really changed until I met my partner. When I met my partner I realized that she had asthma and so she had never picked up any tobacco product as it was a breathing hazard for her. As I continued to see her, I realized that she had no interest and so naturally I started to think about quitting. I realized she did not need it to function and so that's when I realized I needed to deal with my addiction head on and quit and with this I realized the real dangers of vaping and the use of any flavored tobacco product in general. I can happily say that I put down my choice of flavored tobacco last July and have not touched anything since. However, for so many young people, their nicotine addiction is so powerful that quitting doesn't feel possible and it takes over their lives.

I urge lawmakers to pass Senator Jill Duson's bill to end the sale of flavored tobacco products so that kids do not have the option to make an impulsive decision like I did.

Dio Sabushmike

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