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LD 1215

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: my name is Tracy Tischler, because I am a parent of young children and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1215, An Act To End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products.

I am writing today because I am concerned about the future of my own children as well as the the children in the community we belong to. Tobacco use has taken over our schools and our students' health and ability to learn, flavored tobacco has created an addiction in children who otherwise would have not tried nicotine and tobacco containing products.

Companies that produce tobacco products are aware that 95% of adults that smoke have started prior to the age of 21. To attract new adult tobacco users, companies have developed attractive flavored products (such as lemonade, bubble gum and cotton candy) to entice our children to begin using their products. Four out of five kids who have used tobacco have started with a flavored product. Many children report that they think these products are 'harmless flavoring' and are not aware of the product being detrimental to physical health, and are not aware of the addictive nature of the products because of the nicotine component.

It is well known that smoking causes disease and disability, harming nearly every organ of the body. U.S surgeon general has issued a statement "No matter how it's delivered, nicotine is harmful for youth and young adults.'

These products have decreased the effectiveness of Maine's efforts to reduce youth tobacco use. It's time to end the sale of all flavored tobacco products in Maine. It's time to give our kids the chance to learn and grow, without threat from thousands of candy, mint, and dessert-flavored tobacco products.

Ending the sale of flavored tobacco products will help keep a generation of kids healthier and happier. Please do your part to prevent youth tobacco addiction. Vote yes on LD 1215.