

**Testimony of Dr. Wendy Alpaugh in support of LD 1215:
An Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products**

Honorable Joe Baldacci, chair and the honorable Michele Meyer, chair and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, this testimony is to express my support for LD 1215:

As I hold my 4 month old granddaughter my thoughts drift to hoping the world she grows up in will offer only health promoting products. Our corporations, rather than focusing solely on the profit margins, will be motivated by societal pressures to reduce our enormous healthcare budget by creating profitable healthful products that will **benefit** our youth and adults. Luring future customers with products harmful to their health would be unconscionable.

Heating chemicals that flavor tobacco products leads to many potentially even more harmful chemicals that may damage lungs and the oral cavity. Do the youth of Maine need to be the “guinea pigs” that suffer the ill effects from these unknown byproducts - which we later trace back to the use of flavored tobacco products? Our pattern of (often unknowingly) allowing the use of harmful products, then suing the manufacturers when it is too late for those afflicted with resulting health problems, is tragic. And sadly, when companies intentionally seduce youth into trying a substance that does not promote health, they succeed financially and the individual suffers and society overall is impacted negatively.

Research has shown that most tobacco users begin the habit in their youth. Allowing these products on the market that are attractive to children - when companies own internal messaging shows their intent to captivate a vulnerable audience – is not fair to the public at large. Unfortunately at this time we need laws protect the public. It is in the best interest of our Maine residents to ban the sale of flavored tobacco products. Corporations need to hear the message from Maine governance that we care about the health of our residents. Maine youth's and adult's, as well as Maine's future financial, wellbeing depend on Maine residents making healthy choices. Please help Mainers make good decisions for their health. Be proactive and protect our youth rather than having to be reactive years after the damage is done.

Thank you so much for all you do! Our state's wellbeing depends on **your** choices. ***We trust you will choose to save our children from temptations that are likely to lead to poor health outcomes for them in their adulthood.*** It impacts all of us indirectly!

Wendy Alpaugh, D.M.D.
218 Sand Beach Road
Stonington, ME 04681