

Dear members of the committee on Health and Human Services. I am submitting testimony in opposition to LD1215. The attempted ban on flavored tobacco products directly contradicts harm reduction and substance use advocates' attempts at normalizing evidence-based harm reduction strategies. Limiting the availability of adult consumer products is an ineffective way to target underage use. Prohibition of substances has never worked and does not work now; this includes nicotine.

If the issue is marketing, as proponents of this legislation suggest, then let us have a conversation about how to create rules around juvenile targeted marketing. There is nothing inherent about flavored products that is aimed at children. We all enjoy the flavors of fruit, and cookies, and all kinds of things we consume, nothing about that is childish or aimed towards children. An outright ban on the sale of all flavored tobacco products, or a ban on anything for that matter, is a simplified and reductive approach to a complex issue.

Nobody on either side of this issue wants to see children be targeted for nicotine consumption or begin using tobacco or nicotine in the first place, but we do not mitigate this very real issue with prohibition. Instead we mitigate this just as we mitigate any other substance use, through understanding, education, conversation, and harm reduction strategies.