

Lana Pelletier
Allagash
LD 1215

As someone who began smoking as a teenager, I have seen firsthand the pathway that children have to accessing tobacco products. I began smoking at the age of 15 through friends, but in time was able to have them regularly and become a smoker when several adults would purchase them for me. I was lucky enough to quit smoking in my 20s when I became a mother, before my tobacco use became a significant drain upon my life. However, not everyone is so fortunate. That is why I believe the Legislature must act and pass LD 1215

That is why I strongly support legislation to ban flavored tobacco products in Maine. These products are often marketed towards youth and can make tobacco use seem appealing and harmless. But the reality is that tobacco use is a major public health crisis that leads to addiction, disease, and death.

Flavored tobacco products are especially insidious because they can mask the harsh taste of tobacco and make it easier for individuals to start smoking. In fact, recent data shows that an overwhelming majority of youth who had used tobacco products in the past 30 days reported using a flavored product during that time.

By banning flavored tobacco products, we can help protect Maine's youth from the dangers of tobacco use. We can prevent a new generation from becoming addicted to nicotine and suffering the devastating health consequences that come with it.

As a social worker, I have seen how addiction can tear families apart and ruin lives. But I have also seen the power of prevention and early intervention in helping individuals overcome addiction and live healthy, fulfilling lives. Banning flavored tobacco products is an important step towards preventing addiction and promoting public health in Maine.

Sincerely,
Lana Pelletier
Allagash