



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Testimony of Meg Helming
before the Committee On Health and Human Services
in support of
LD 1174: An Act To Prohibit The Sale Of Flavored Tobacco Products

April 25, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Committee On Health and Human Services, my name is Meg Helming and I'm the COO for the YMCA Alliance of Northern New England, which represents the 15 YMCAs in Maine. The YMCA strongly supports LD 1174: *An Act To Prohibit The Sale Of Flavored Tobacco Products*.

The YMCA is a community leader in supporting children, adults and families in their lifelong quest for physical, emotional and social wellness. As one of the largest youth-serving organizations in the state that has been in operation for more than 150 years, we are particularly concerned about the sharp increase in Maine youth's use of tobacco products in recent years. The evidence shows that the vast majority of youth who have used tobacco started with a flavored product. According to the US Surgeon General, nicotine exposure during adolescence and young adulthood can cause addiction and harm the developing brain. We feel strongly that ending the sale of flavored tobacco products in Maine is a critical step in protecting the health and wellbeing of our community's youth.

At the Y, we believe that all kids deserve the opportunity to thrive. The Maine YMCAs stand in partnership with other health and youth-serving organizations across the state in support of strong public health policies that protect Maine youth.

Respectfully submitted,

Meg Helming
YMCA Alliance of Northern New England

Maine YMCAs:

Auburn-Lewiston YMCA • Bangor Region YMCA • Bath Area Family YMCA • Boothbay Region YMCA • Central Lincoln County YMCA • Down East Family YMCA • Kennebec Valley YMCA • Mount Desert Island YMCA • Old Town-Orono YMCA • Penobscot Bay YMCA • Sanford-Springvale YMCA • State YMCA of Maine • Waldo County YMCA • YMCA of Greater Waterville • YMCA of Southern Maine

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