

Testimony of Courtney Vannah, Program Manager, Oral Health Initiatives, MCD Global Health
for LD 1215: An Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products

Before the Health and Human Services Committee
Public Hearing: Wednesday April 25, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee, I am pleased to offer testimony in support of LD1215. I am the Program Manager of Oral Health Initiatives at MCD Global Health, a dental hygienist, and a lifelong resident of rural Maine. I am submitting testimony to encourage the Committee to support this Bill to end the sale of flavored tobacco products.

From a professional standpoint, the research connecting tobacco use to negative oral health and overall health outcomes is well-established. I have spent my career counseling patients to end their use of tobacco products to improve their health.

From a personal standpoint, I have observed that when youth begin experimenting with tobacco use, they do so with flavored products. Even more than two decades ago, when I was coming of age in a time where tobacco use was far more commonplace, the products I recall my peers using were flavored. To this day, I still do not know any adult tobacco user who prefers flavored products; they are targeted to and enjoyed by younger users. This leads me to anecdotally assert that flavored products provide an enjoyable entry point for vulnerable youth only to become trapped by nicotine addiction.

As such, I could not do anything other than support this bill to end the sale of flavored tobacco products and protect our vulnerable youth from what could become a lifelong struggle that will undoubtedly lead to negative health outcomes. I urge you to support LD 1215: An Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products. I thank you for your consideration of my testimony on this important issue.

Sincerely,

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