



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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**Testimony of Rep. Dan Ankeles
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
In support of LD 1215, An Act To End The Sale Of Flavored Tobacco Products**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and honorable members of the Health and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. I am Representative Dan Ankeles, and I serve House District 100, a central slice of Brunswick that includes our downtown, Bowdoin College, Mere Point, Maquoit Bay and the former naval air station. It's an honor to provide brief written testimony in support of **LD 1215, An Act To End The Sale Of Flavored Tobacco Products**.

I would have been before you in person, but I have my own bill to present today and also feel that these larger hearings should be more about the public than about hearing from your colleagues. That said, it is important that you hear from communities like Brunswick that have already made the leap by enacting the local version of this bill.

Let me just give you a couple of quick, big-picture takeaways roughly one year later:

First, the sky did not fall. The businesses who opposed this are still very much open, even though people who want flavored tobacco products need to go to one of our neighbors to buy them.

Second, administrators in our school system are saying that they see a decrease in the use of tobacco products among students. Students haven't made the extra effort to get the products in other towns. They didn't substitute cigarettes or other conventional tobacco products. No, without the flavored products right at their fingertips, fewer students made the choice to consume any tobacco product at all.

The positive ripple effects on their physical health are clear. Imagine through a health care lens one timeline where someone becomes a lifelong consumer and one where they don't. It's not hard to do the math.

But what might be less obvious is that we also heard that students themselves began to experience a less hostile daily student culture as vaping began to become a less dominant behavior. In other words, the entire student body is benefiting from this positive change. And we

know now more than ever that the quality of the environment in which a child comes of age truly matters.

We live in a time where kids are managing incredible amounts of stress and strains on their mental health¹, even if it isn't always easy to see right on the surface. Tobacco companies use flavored products to take an already-impressionable population and exploit their fears and insecurities. If we pass LD 1215, we stop helping them do it.

Thank you again for the chance to share our experience with you.

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/YRBS_Data-Summary-Trends_Report2023_508.pdf
District 100: Brunswick (part)