

Testimony of Daniel Tremble in support of LD 1215

An Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products

Bangor City Councilor

Owner, Fairmount Market, Bangor

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, My name is Daniel Tremble, I live in Bangor, Maine and I am writing to testify in favor LD 1215, “An Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products.”

I am submitting testimony on my own behalf, and as the owner and operator of the Fairmount Market. If you’re ever in Bangor, come by. We were finalists in the Bangor Daily News’ competition for best local pizza, and I think we make the best sandwiches in town. We opened our doors in 1925 and have been serving the neighborhood around Fairmount and Fifth Street Parks ever since. We get all walks of life coming through our doors, and we try to have something special for everyone, including some tobacco products.

I have updated my testimony from the last legislative session on an identical bill to LD 1215. Some things have changed since then – namely, Bangor passed a flavored ban, but my sentiments still stand. It is important to note that I opposed the Bangor City Council ban because I believe this regulation should happen on a state-wide level.

Our market is part of the community. We try to give back as much as we can. One of the things we do for the neighborhood is sponsor a local Little League team. In 2019, our team won the West Side Little League Championship! I’m proud of those kids. I go to the games when I can and cheer them on. And it would break my heart if I saw one of them vaping or smoking cigarettes. There’s no way I want to sponsor a Little League team and turn around the next day and put those same kids at risk of tobacco addiction.

So, as I’ve learned more about flavored tobacco, I can easily say “get these things off the market”. Luring kids into a lifetime of addiction is no business I want to be in, and I bet there are plenty of store owners around the state who feel the same way.

Flavored tobacco products are clearly targeted at getting our children hooked on tobacco. Just look at the list of flavors sold: brown sugar graham cracker, hot cocoa, orange creamsicle, and zombie. These are putting a bullseye on every kid in our communities.

So, why do they sell them in all those flavors? I now know the answer is clear, 97% of adult smokers started before the age of 21. To strengthen their place in the market, tobacco companies need to get kids hooked to have future customers.

My hope for the kids on my Little League team, and for all children, is that they be given the opportunity to reach their full potential. Addiction to nicotine limits that opportunity and leaves too many kids behind.

We are the adults here. We have the power to protect our children from something we know, with absolute certainty, will adversely impact their futures. When you get ready to cast your vote on LD 1215, remember that menthol cigarettes, mint-flavored chew, and banana cream pie vaping products are a cynical strategy to addict our children to tobacco. It is time to end the sale of flavored tobacco products.

Please support LD 1215, and put our kids' development and future success first. And for those of you with kids and grandkids playing Little League, watch out for Fairmount Market! We're looking to be state champions next year! Thank you for your time and commitment to kids' health.

Sincerely,

Daniel Tremble

Owner Operator Fairmount Market