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I express my full support for this bill, but I think that the legislature should go further and pass a complete ban on the manufacture and sale of tobacco products in the state of Maine.

It has been proven beyond debate that tobacco is inherently harmful and addictive. Unlike with other substances such as alcohol which have the potential to be abused, but pose no serious health threats by the mere use in moderation, tobacco has been proven to be addictive by its very nature.

I am all for the free market capitalist system, but this does not in my opinion extend to give tobacco companies a right to continue selling an inherently harmful product onto the population, maintaining their very business by trapping millions of people into an addiction with often tragic consequences.

Drugs have consistently been banned on the basis of their harmful character, there is no reason why tobacco should get special treatment simply because of its long history, or the fact that its harmful effects were not always known.

To be clear, I do not believe that we should criminalize the mere possession or use of tobacco, but the manufacture and sale of tobacco should not be permitted anywhere within the state of Maine. Yes, tobacco should not be sold near schools, but a better question to ask is why should it be sold anywhere? I respectfully ask the legislature to consider amending this bill to ban the manufacture and sale of tobacco in the state of Maine.