

Testimony of Lani Graham, MD, MPH

In Support of LD's 166 & 1938

An Act to Prohibit the Sale of Tobacco Products in Pharmacies and Retail Establishments Containing Pharmacies (166) & An Act Regarding the Regulation of Tobacco (1938)

Presented by Representative Moonen

Before the Health and Human Services Committee, May 13, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Lani Graham. I am a physician and public health expert, here in support of these two LD's, 166 & 1938, which take needed steps toward further reduction of the use of tobacco in this state, which despite all our efforts over many decades is still the king of death in Maine.

We are all concerned, and rightly so, about other addiction related deaths, the impact of guns and deaths from various other causes. Meanwhile, tobacco goes on quietly killing Mainers year in and year out, and has done so for decades. A third of the cancer deaths in Maine are attributable to smoking. Millions are spent in direct health care costs and there are significant losses of productivity.¹ I could go on and on, but I believe we all know these dismal facts. We have made great progress in reducing tobacco use along with protecting others from its use, but there is more to do. These two bills take important steps to further reduce the terrible toll of tobacco.

LD 166 which stops the sale of tobacco products in pharmacies seems like the classic "no brainer". Why would you sell an addictive product that causes so much death and injury in a place that people come to improve their health? A 2014 survey showed that two-thirds of Americans would support a ban on tobacco sales in pharmacies, including nearly half of people who smoke. It is also true that research indicates that such a ban could indeed reduce use by smokers.² Even the large chain of CVS has decided to stop the sale of tobacco products in its stores.

LD 1938 moves Maine forward in other important ways. It prevents the sale of tobacco in vending machines, helping to better protect Maine children. It makes hotels and motels in Maine tobacco free, serving to protect hospitality employees and non-smoking guests from exposure to tobacco smoke residue. It tells retailers we are serious about the importance of not violating these laws. And finally, the bill makes a needed

¹ <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/maine>

² <https://countertobacco.org/policy/tobacco-free-pharmacies/#:~:text=A%202014%20survey%20showed%20two,of%20tobacco%20products%20in%20pharmacies.>

clarification of the definition of “electronic smoking device” to assure that “innocent bystanders” are not caught up in our efforts to control tobacco use through taxes.

I hope you will unanimously support these two rather simple, but important bills.

Thank you for your attention.