



Testimony of Whitney A Parrish Perry

American Heart Association

In Support of LD 1938

An Act Regarding the Regulation of Tobacco

May 13, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Whitney Parrish Perry, and I am the Government Relations Director of the American Heart Association (AHA)—the nation’s oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke, whose mission is to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. We are testifying in support LD 1938, “*An Act Regarding the Regulation of Tobacco*.” We extend our gratitude to Representative Moonen for the introduction of this bill.

Tobacco use remains the nation’s number one cause of preventable death. Use of tobacco products is responsible for nearly 1 in 5 deaths nationwide, and smoking is attributed to 2,390 deaths per year in our state.ⁱ Additionally, Maine has the unfortunate distinction of having the highest smoking rate in the Northeast.ⁱⁱ

We must close loopholes in our current laws to improve the health of Mainers. LD 1938 does this by prohibiting the use of tobacco products in hotels and motels that rent to members of the public, as well as prohibiting the sale of tobacco products in vending machines. Maine residents, visitors, and workers will breathe easier knowing they will not be subject in these spaces to secondhand smoke, which causes heart disease, lung disease, and cancer and is responsible for more than 41,000 deaths annually in the U.S. alone, including nearly 34,000 deaths from heart disease.

Additionally, we must ensure that our tobacco control framework is modern, clear, and driven by public health needs and strategies. This bill takes steps to do this by adopting an



updated definition of ‘electronic smoking device,’ as well as enhancing monetary penalties associated with tobacco retail licensure violations, which have not been updated in 20 years. This increase in distributor fines is a meaningful update to this regulatory framework.

We respectfully urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1938. Thank you for your time and consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Whitney A Parrish Perry
Government Relations Director, Maine
American Heart Association

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ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health. BRFSS Prevalence & Trends Data [online]. 2025. URL: <https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/brfssprevalence/>.

ⁱⁱ Ibid.