

Subject: Support of Ending the Sale of Flavored Tobacco

Senator Baldacci Representative Meyer and Health and Human Services Committee:

As a resident of Maine an advocate for the American Heart Association I **am supportive of the *Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products.***

The use of tobacco products remains the nation's number one cause of preventable death and in Maine it is no different. Our youth are most at risk because of flavored tobacco. More than 27,000 kids will die prematurely from smoking if we don't act to protect them.

Tobacco companies are targeting youth with flavored tobacco products. Products that come in array of kid friendly candy and fruit flavors and are sold in colorful packaging that is designed to attract tweens and teens. Tobacco companies uses flavor to hook a new generation of kids on its deadly products. Flavors hide the bad taste of tobacco and make it easier for kids to try. Menthol has the additional quality of soothing the irritation of combustible cigarettes, which is why so many young people start smoking using menthol cigarettes.

As a parent with students in the Falmouth School System I hear first hand from them the availability and appeal of these products for teens and even more so in the middle school. It is concerning how attractive flavored tobacco products are to children.

We must do everything in our power to keep our communities healthy and safe and you have an opportunity for making sure that Maine residents are healthy and safe against the harms from tobacco by voting to eliminate all flavors in all products.

Sincerely,

Melanie Tinto
27 Thornhurst Road, Falmouth, ME 04105
Phone: 704.650.4073
Email: cat97002@gmail.com