

## TESTIMONY REGARDING LD 1215

Good afternoon -

My name is Dr. Thomas J. Keating and I live in Portland. I present today to support LD 1215, an act to prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products in the State of Maine.

I am a retired medical oncologist and palliative care physician, having practiced in Brunswick, the Augusta-Waterville region, and Portland. Over the course of my 30 year career, I treated many patients who suffered and frequently died from the harmful effects of long term tobacco use. The tobacco industry has recently targeted young Maine residents by adding flavors to cigarettes and e-cigarettes that addict many to life-long use of these products. These include cherry, mint, cotton candy, and gummy bear. Menthol cigarettes have been on the markets for years. What they all have in common is that they ameliorate the harsh effects of tobacco. A 2019 study showed that 70 % of the 4.3 million students who used tobacco in the previous 30 days used a flavored product. And over 85 % of African-Americans who smoke use menthol cigarettes.

The use of e-cigarettes is a relatively recent phenomenon and therefore there are no long term studies regarding its safety. But some recent data has indicated that there are significant adverse respiratory effects from vaping.

I therefore ask you today to protect all Mainers, in particular our children and those in the African-American community, by enacting LD 1215 to prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products in the State of Maine.

Thank you.

Thomas J Keating, MD, MS, MA