

Hello Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Griffy Young, and I am a High School student in Ellsworth. I am in support of LD 1215, An Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products.

Maine high school students are being targeted relentlessly by tobacco companies eager to create new customers out of us. They're using fruit, candy, and dessert flavors to lure us in and then getting us hooked on nicotine potentially for life.

My LGBTQ+ friends and classmates face additional targeting from tobacco companies and therefore higher rates of tobacco use. For example, 14-17 year old transgender youth report recent tobacco use that is 3 times higher than that of their cisgender peers<sup>1</sup>. Higher rates of tobacco use among LGBTQ+ folks aren't just by accident, they're intentional. Tobacco companies target LGBTQ+ youth through advertisements and sponsoring of events like pride parades.

It's unbelievable to me how we can continue to let tobacco companies get away with this kind of targeting that is so clearly designed to addict young people, and cash in on those addictions. We need the State of Maine to stand up and protect our health and lives over the profits of tobacco retailers who rely on this business model.

None of my friends have gotten addicted to flavored tobacco by accident. It's all part of Big Tobacco's plan. That's why I urge you to vote in support of LD 1215 and stand up for all Maine youth. Thank you for doing what is right.

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Johnson SE, O'Brien EK, Coleman B, et al. Sexual and gender minority US youth tobacco use: Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health (PATH) Study Wave 3, 2015–2016. 2019;57(2):256-6