

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

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

I am writing to you today because I'm tired of watching my friends and peers getting hooked on flavored tobacco products, and having their lives derailed as a result. Nobody ever thinks that a mango-mint, cookies and cream, or cherry blast tobacco product will cause them to get kicked off of a sports team, fail a class, or drive a wedge in a friendship. But I've seen it happen over and over again.

1 out of 5 Maine teens use tobacco, and 4 out of 5 started with a flavored product. These might sound like just numbers to you, but these are my friends, classmates, and family members. It's hard to watch knowing that nothing will change until action is taken. Even though we learn in health class that nicotine addiction is bad for our mental and physical health, education alone isn't enough to stop kids from getting drawn in by the flavors and getting sucked in by powerful nicotine addiction.

In my final year of high school, I'd like to be able to go to the bathroom and not have to see groups of kids trying to get their fix in between classes and I'd not have any more friends lose track of what's important because of insatiable nicotine addiction. But that's not possible unless we end the sale of flavored tobacco products.

I urge you to vote in favor of LD 1215, An Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products so Maine students can lead happy and healthy lives free from tobacco addiction.