

## Testimony of Madelyn Danse

### In Favor of LD 1215, An Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products

Good afternoon, Senator Chair Baldacci, House Chair Meyer and members of the Committee. My name is Madelyn Danse. I'm 22-years old and live in Portland. I am here to speak in favor of LD 1215.

I am in recovery from a tobacco addiction which started from flavored tobacco beginning when I was 16 years old.

It all started when I took a hit from a Juul offered by a friend from school. I can honestly say that I felt almost instantly addicted to the head rush that came with that first hit of a mango Juul. From that point on, I felt like I needed a Juul and pods. I went through a pod per day. As you may know, a single pod is the equivalent in nicotine of 20 cigarettes. It was relatively easy to get through friends. I was spending \$40 or more per week on the pods.

As a kid who had sports-induced asthma, the physical effects included shortness of breath and wheezing which slowed me down in hockey. The mental stress of the addiction itself caused anxiety and depression. I could feel a little better with a hit from the Juul but that was short-lived and, of course, a bad cycle.

Quitting was incredibly hard. I tried at least 10 times before I finally was able to quit a little more than a year ago. So, that means I was a heavy user for 5 years. I would try and would then get intense cravings that would only be fixed by hitting the Juul. With so many other friends who also used it, the pods were always available and that made it even hard to quit.

Finally, I was able to quit — for good — when I became pregnant with my son Austin (who is here with me today). I knew that the health effects on me and potentially for him were too much of a risk to take. So today, I'm proud to have been free of tobacco and nicotine for 14 months.

I urge you to vote in favor of this ban. These products are so addictive and so clearly marketed to young people. Worse yet, the long-term effects of this intense use of nicotine and the other chemical in the pods are not fully known. And, as a new mother who struggled to get over this addiction, I don't want these dangerous products to be available to Austin as he grows up.