

**Testimony in Support of LD 1215: An Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products
Submitted by Ninon Eppich, student at South Portland High School
April 25, 2023**

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: my name is Ninon Eppich, I am a student at South Portland High School and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1215, An Act To End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products.

When I walk into the bathroom at school, I am bombarded with the scent of cotton candy or peach or blue raspberry. The types of scents somebody might associate with sugar-crazed children in a candy shop. When in fact, these smells are coming from the highly addictive flavored tobacco products, straight from the hands of my peers. It is too easy for adolescents to become addicted to nicotine. Flavored tobacco is becoming increasingly popular among high school students. The industry uses sweet, enticing flavors to lure in adolescents. Fifty percent of whom have no idea that the products they are using are addictive. I see it's use every day; in the bathrooms between classes, on social media, I've even had friends fall victim to it. The tobacco industry uses flavors in order to target the younger generation and hide the addictiveness of their products.

Banning flavored tobacco products is an extremely important step in protecting Maine Youth from addiction and its consequences. Twenty percent of Maine teens use tobacco, and 4 out of 5 started with a flavored tobacco product. They are intentionally promoting nicotine addiction at a young age in order to latch onto decades of profits.

As students who cannot vote, we need your help preventing addiction among Maine teens by ending the sale of flavored tobacco products in our state. I urge you to vote 'YES' on LD 1215. The health and future of my generation, and our state, depends on it.