



Testimony of Julia MacDonald, Maine Director of Government Relations  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network and  
Allyson Perron Drag, Government Relations Director  
American Heart Association, and Lance Boucher,  
Assistant Vice President, State Public Policy, Eastern Division  
American Lung Association

***LD 2157, An Act to Prohibit Tobacco Sales near Schools***

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and Health and Human Services Committee thank you for allowing us to provide testimony. The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society and the nation's leading advocate for evidence-based public policies to reduce the cancer burden for everyone. The American Heart Association is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke, whose mission is to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease, through research, education, and advocacy. Our organizations continue to work on the most effective ways to prevent and reduce tobacco and to limit access to tobacco especially for our youth, and we believe that LD2157 would help limit the number of tobacco retailers.

In Maine, nearly 17% adults smoke cigarettes, the highest rate in the Northeast.<sup>i</sup> More than 16% of Maine high school students smoke cigarettes<sup>ii</sup> and 30% of Maine high school students<sup>iii</sup> and over 11% of middle school students have used e-cigarettes.<sup>iv</sup> Over 15% percent of high school students are current users of e-cigarettes.<sup>v</sup>

Tobacco products are sold seemingly everywhere—grocery stores, gas stations, convenience stores—making it far too easy for kids to obtain cigarettes, flavored cigars, snuff, and e-cigarettes. Too many youth are using tobacco products and tobacco companies continue to aggressively market these products to young people. We need to do more, not less, to keep these dangerous and addictive products away from kids. In fact, middle and high school students report buying e-cigarettes in places like gas stations and convenience stores, and most retail stores do not refuse sales of tobacco products to youth. Tobacco companies intentionally advertise in places where kids regularly gather and shop. Tobacco companies continue to target youth with their products and marketing including selling tobacco products in candy, fruit, and minty menthol flavors in gas stations, convenience stores, and grocery stores. Tobacco companies deliberately make it easy for kids to buy their dangerous and addictive products. Many tobacco retailers are located near public schools, but LD2157 can change that. The health risks to individuals and families increase when there are more places to buy tobacco products locally. Communities with a high number of tobacco retailers are at greater risk of youth using dangerous and addictive tobacco products. In these communities, it is also harder for those already

using tobacco products to quit. LD2157 can reduce the number of places where tobacco products are sold, which makes it easier to keep these products away from kids.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony We look forward to working with you in the Maine Legislature to ensure that we are protecting our youth against the harms of tobacco. As such, we urge you to vote ought to pass for LD2157.

Sincerely

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<sup>i</sup> US CDC [Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults in the United States | CDC](#)

<sup>ii</sup> Maine CDC, 2023 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS), [Maine High School Detailed Tables](#)

<sup>iii</sup> Maine CDC, 2023 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS), [Maine High School Detailed Tables](#).

<sup>iv</sup> Maine CDC, 2023 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) [Maine Middle School Detailed Tables](#)