

LD 1550: An Act To End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products
Testimony of Dr. Perry Bassett, Washington County, Maine
May 7, 2021

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: my name is Dr. Perry Bassett from Washington County, Maine and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1550, An Act To End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products.

I'm an ER physician here in Washington County, I serve the communities in our area in Washington County. I'm here in Mathias at Danny's Community Hospital. And I also work at Calais Regional Hospital in Calais.

I'd like to just briefly share with you an anecdotal story of a male teen age 18, who came into the ER, here a few weeks ago. And at first, when he first came to the ER, we weren't sure about all of his habits outside of the hospital. We had initially had a little trouble getting all the information. But he came in with a very fast heartbeat, around 145 to 150. And we weren't sure why his heart was going so fast.

He had no history of any heart trouble. He had never had a heart attack or he wasn't on no medication for heart. And yet, he was very anxious, almost agitated, and he had a fast heartbeat. And so, in speaking to him initially, he just said he didn't feel good and that he thought his heart was racing. And so we did an EKG and we found out as I said that his heart rate was actually very abnormal, around 145 to 150. Subsequently, his mother came in and with his permission, we talked to his mom.

We found out from his mother that he had been vaping. He had been doing this on and off for some time, but in the last few weeks, he had been vaping, a pod every day. Many people don't know that one jewel pod or one cartridge of vaping device can have 24 milligrams of nicotine, which is the same amount of nicotine that's in a whole pack of cigarettes. And so if you vape one pod, you can get just as much nicotine as if you smoked a whole pack of cigarettes.

We hooked him up to our monitor, we did quite a bit of lab work lab work and we found out that he had no other problems, we checked his cardiac enzymes and functions, they were all normal, and gave him some IV fluid. And subsequently was able to get his heart rate down just by giving him fluids and just letting him rest in bed. And he did much better.

Finally, he did confess, with his mother's prompting, that he had been vaping. And that he had done several different flavors. He liked it because there's no smell, it tastes great. And he thought there was no problem until he woke up, got up this day, and found his heart rate going really fast.

So this story had a good outcome because we were able to educate and talk with him about the dangers of vaping. Hopefully, this is going to alter his behavior in the future. This was not a bad

outcome, which is a good story. But there are stories out there, of course, where people have vaped and they have had a very bad outcome such as even death. So hopefully this little anecdotal story helps you understand how vaping can affect your body.

Please vote 'yes' on LD 1550 and end the sale of flavored tobacco in Maine. Thank you for allowing me to share my story, happy to answer any questions.