

Corrie Calderwood
Brunswick

LD 1550: An Act To End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products

Testimony of Corrie Anne Calderwood, High School Classroom Teacher, resides in Brunswick Maine

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Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: my name is Corrie Calderwood, I live in Brunswick, and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1550, An Act To End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products.

I am a public school teacher who has seen this problem on the front lines in the bathrooms and hallways of our schools. For many teens, the “yummy” taste and smell of these tobacco products means that they are not “as bad as” cigarettes or chewing tobacco. Many believe that because there isn’t a flame involved or a harsh taste that makes them cough, that means that there isn’t anything wrong with these products, that they aren’t harmful. This is especially true with menthol-flavored products because not only does this flavor “taste good,” but it has the effect to ease the harshness of the tobacco, which in turn makes it easier to ingest, which then, in turn, makes it easier for a habit to form because the tobacco industry has hooked another consumer on their line.

As any parent, teacher, or person who regularly engages with children and teens know, their brains are not fully formed, and the part that is the last to form is the protective part that helps adults make better decisions about what is safe and what is harmful. The tobacco industry understands this fact too, which is why they market directly to young people and not adults because our frontal lobes recognize this untruth easier than our youth can. This is why it’s vitally important to pass this legislation to continue to do our jobs as adults, parents, and teachers, which is to protect, educate, and even legislate rules and laws that work to improve the lives of all Mainers.

I primarily teach juniors and seniors, many of who have tried these products when they were younger in middle school and freshman years and many will speak to “knowing better” as they get older and feel ashamed of their younger selves for “falling for” the idea that because a tobacco product tastes good means that it can’t be bad for you.

So I testify asking for all of the adults in the room to do our jobs, protect our kids from misleading and untruthful marketing, and keep these harmful and unnecessary products far away from Maine by ending the sale of flavored tobacco products before they are able to lure and hook another generation of young consumers. It’s time to end the sale of flavored tobacco. Please vote ‘yes’ on LD 1550.