

*LD 1550: An Act To End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products*  
*Testimony of Angela Fochesato, Machias, Maine*  
*May 7, 2021*

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: my name is Angela Fochesato from Machias, 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 the Cancer Patient Navigator here in Washington County. I work with so many patients who have cancers related to their tobacco use. Over the years, I've seen so much devastation from smoking. I have seen so many lives - actually not just lives but families traumatized by cancer. There are so many cancers that are associated with tobacco use: Lung, tongue, throat, esophageal cancer and from second hand smoke there is bladder cancer.

I had a patient I helped navigate their throat cancer. He now doesn't have a voice box due to smoking menthol cigarettes and speaks through a mechanical voice box. He would join me when I would teach classes to youth who were caught smoking. He would say to them in his mechanical voice, "I want you to hear my voice. This could be you when you are older. When you are later in life speaking to your younger self saying, "why didn't you stop smoking when you could. Save yourself this kind of pain"

Another woman I work with, told me that when she was a teenager she started smoking. She didn't like the taste of the tobacco. Her friends told her to try menthol because it was like brushing her teeth. As she was dying, she told me the worst lies that anyone can tell themselves is that it doesn't kill you and you don't get hooked. Please, let's end the sale of flavored tobacco, including menthol and mint.

I watch so many people dying of cancer that could be preventable and it feels overwhelming. But it's not too late. We've got to do something for these next generations.

Thank you for your work to protect Maine kids by taking flavored tobacco including menthol off of our store shelves.