

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kayla Hauger, and I stand firmly against LD 1550. As a child I was properly educated about the harmful effects of cigarettes and even convinced my mother to quit the habit in my teen years. I went to college and stayed firm in the belief that I would never be someone who used tobacco products. My degree in Culinary Arts brought me to a high school residential life program where I provided breakfast to students and planned menus. The menu planning process introduced me to tobacco products through my manager who insisted that I smoke cigarettes with him so that he would not be “alone in the morning” and I would “get real kitchen experience.” It was my manager’s belief that cigarettes were a staple for all chefs and that I should get on board with it quickly. I was young and impressionable and fell victim to his pressures as he joked that I would not survive in the restaurant industry without this vice.

Five years and several kitchens later, I met up with an old friend who saw that I was still using cigarettes. I smelled like an ash tray and wheezed when I spoke at 24 years old. My friend saw me and asked me to come with him to his place of work, a vape shop. I set foot in the store and thought to myself about what I had done that brought me to a point of needing another form of nicotine to finally distance myself from cigarettes. I cried in the shop as he told me about the product. He told me that I could use an e-liquid that smelled like strawberry hard candies, the ones my grandma always kept around, and that I could control how much nicotine I was taking in. He provided me with education on the ingredients used in the e-liquid as well as the cotton and wire used to build the coils. He explained how the battery in the device worked and made certain I knew about battery safety. At the end of what was a long, educational process, he set up my new device, with that delicious smelling liquid and told me to try it.

I took one inhale from that device, and I knew I had found my way out. I had found a way to stop disappointing my mother who was furious I had picked up cigarettes, especially after all my pleading as a child to get her to stop. I had found a way to see family and friends I had cut myself off from due to my habit and fear of judgement. I smelled better. I smiled more. I did not fear my breath or any lingering smoke in my clothes. After two weeks, I was not wheezing anymore when I spoke. My snoring subsided and I could take my dog for a run without having to stop him due to my lack of breath. If my friend had brought me to his shop in a world where LD 1550 had passed and I was asked to pick up a device filled with tobacco flavored e-liquid, I would have kept my cigarettes. I would still wheeze when I spoke or worse.

I ask you to consider how banning flavored e-liquid would affect many adults who have been in my position. Please do not allow this bill to pass into law as I will undoubtedly fall victim to combustible tobacco once more and I know I am not alone.

Thank you,

Kayla Hauger