

LD 1550: An Act to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products  
Testimony of Eliza Mathias, Hampden, ME

*May 7, 2021*

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

Menthol cigarettes were part of my journey to smoking. As a young teenager, smoking was “cool”. My first cigarettes did not taste good. When a friend said I should try menthol to make smoking easier, I was hooked. I only smoked menthols for a few years, but I smoked cigarettes for much longer. Menthol was the reason I became addicted, which caused my long dangerous habit.

I do not want my children to have the same opportunity to become addicted to these lethal products. Now there are even more opportunities for teenagers to become addicted to nicotine. Tobacco use at our high school is rampant. Kids vape in the classroom. Part of the problem is that tobacco companies have packaged tobacco in a way that attracts and hooks kids. The flavored tobacco products - menthol, candy, and dessert-flavored products, they put them in colorful packaging to attract new users and addict them to tobacco. Most smokers start at an early age, so big tobacco wants to hook kids early.

Maine needs healthy citizens to lead us into the future. Tobacco is luring and hooking teenagers into an unhealthy habit. Please end the sale of flavored tobacco and vote ‘yes’ on LD 1550.”

I thank the committee for hearing my remarks. I am available to answer any questions you may have.

Eliza Mathias

Hampden, ME