Caitlin O'Rourke Portland

Putting vapes in the same category as flavored menthol cigarettes is wrong. I have used vape products for 18 months and have been successful in quitting a cigarette addiction. I had made attempts to quit before, attempting to use patches through the QUIT NOW line that Maine offers and was unsuccessful. Vape dependency or nicotine dependency is not what I would like to continue for the rest of my life, but without the ability to buy these products in Maine I would simply travel across the border to buy these products in New Hampshire. I am an adult with informed consent, I use flavored vape juice responsibly. Taking the option to buy these products in Maine will simply cause the loss of jobs and revenue in Maine and shift it to New Hampshire. I know others that may go back to smoking not out of choice but out of dependency. Prohibition has repeatedly proven that when there exists a market for a product, but if the product is unavailable to obtain through legal means, people will still use the product. With alcohol prohibition there was the rise of tainted liquor, a rise in the potency of the product, and an increase in health related problems. This country has already seen what a black market looks like for tobacco, when children buying unregulated e-cigarettes off the black market ended up in hospitals with severe lung damage. You could be calling the same fate upon yourselves without allowing for the legal regulation and sale of tobacco products.