Christopher Jackson Shapleigh Maine LD 1693

As a business owner here in the state of Maine I strongly urge you to oppose this bill. I currently have 3 retail locations throughout this state that sell flavored tobacco products. As a former smoker I can honestly say vaping saved my life. It has been the single most effective harm reduction tool a smoker has to quit. We can all agree we don't want to see minors using these products but eliminating flavors will have a horrific impact on adult vapers. I urge you to allow policies such as the pact act and pmta process to take effect and wait for more recent studies which I believe you will see a decline in minors using these products. Once flavors are banned you will see an explosion of traditional tobacco use and many former vapers revert to smoking. Banning flavored vape will most certainly play into the hand of big tobacco and will only work in their favor. Most of the products my business sell is small companies and not big tobacco as many of you may think. I believe we should exhaust all means of education and enforcement before banning these products. It's hard to believe I stand before you, fighting for our rights and my rights to sell a product that has had such a profound health impact on so many while products such as flavored alcohol and marijuana are legal in this state. You will hear many sad stories of loved ones who have passed due to smoking, and they will urge you to ban vaping. But what they fail to mention is there is almost no common denominator between vaping and smoking other than nicotine. And vaping is one of the only harm reduction tool a smoker has that allows for the oral fixation without nicotine all together. Also, worth noting no carcinogens or cancer forming chemicals. I truly believe products such as these should be sold in specialty stores and treated more like marijuana sold in 21+ locations keeping them out of sight from minors. Please oppose this bill as it is a band aid for a much larger issues. We all know prohibition doesn't work so please think of other ways to mitigate these issues and use all means of enforcement and education before attempting to ban these products. Black markets and other issues will arise, and when one door closes another will open. Thank you