

Dear Senators,

My name is Dr. Nevin Zablotsky. I am a healthcare educator presently teaching and consulting on the subject of nicotine products, addiction and their impact on public health at a medical and dental school. I have lectured on this subject for over twenty years throughout the country but especially in Vermont where I practiced for over 30 years.

I have spoken to elementary students in Winooski, and Franklin County; Boy scouts in Essex Junction, Junior and Senior High School students in Richford and Enosburg, and students at the University of Vermont in the Sociology Department.

The younger students are eager to learn about these products and have a sense that they are dangerous. As I speak to older students, they seem to be drawn to using them because of peer pressure, the excitement of trying something new, and to rebel against adult authority. Tragically, they are totally unaware of the dangers of becoming addicted to nicotine.

The vaping products on the market today are a testimony to the ability of Tobacco companies to make their products alluring

to children and young adults. They have added benzoic acid to the nicotine molecule to make it more able to pass through the blood brain barrier, and use higher concentrations of nicotine. In addition, it also no longer irritates the throat, and has a pleasant taste and smell, allowing innocent kids to find using it a pleasant experience, only later to find they have become addicted to the product.

On a positive note, California just passed a law prohibiting the sale of most flavored tobacco products, including flavored e-cigarettes and menthol cigarettes, as well as tobacco product flavor enhancers at retail locations. On a negative note, RJ Reynolds is now trying to skirt around this new law by introducing new non-menthol versions with "a taste that satisfies the senses". The new additive is 200 times more potent than the old menthol additive not to mention all the other newer flavors now being added.

I recently was somewhat optimistic about the FDA banning menthol products, but now see that they would only ban some of the tobacco products, and exclude e-cigarettes and others. In addition it looks like it might take a decade to finally ban most of them. Given how many children and adults this will hurt in the interim, I hope that you will pass new laws banning these products this year and protect all the citizens of Vermont from the harms they cause. In addition, please increase the funding to help those already addicted to overcome their addiction. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of further help to you.

Sincerely,
Dr. Nevin Zablotsky