



To: Senate Health & Welfare

From: Jay Nichols , Executive Director

Date: 2/24/23

Subject: S.18

*The Vermont Principals' Association supports school leaders to improve the equity and quality of educational opportunities for all students.*

Officially, for the record, Jay Nichols, Executive Director of the Vermont Principals' Association.

Vaping in schools is reaching a crisis level not only in high schools but also in middle schools in the state. School administrators are spending an inordinate amount of time checking bathrooms and other spots in schools and on school grounds during school hours tracking down students who are seeking to feed their addiction. School districts are spending a great deal of money setting up vape sensors in bathrooms and other places within the school. Schools are catching students vaping and providing them with educational training as a part of their plan for addressing these issues - these education modules dealing with vaping are not free and schools are paying for this programming.

I can unequivocally state that the VPA 100% supports a ban on flavored tobacco products including vaping and e-cigarettes. These products are targeted toward our children with the goal of these companies looking to create nicotine dependency and increase profits by marketing toward future clients by poisoning them with these addictive products while they are young. Vaping is an immense problem in our schools right now. Anything we can do to keep these products away from kids is a positive.

School leaders nationally report that although vaping doesn't care about one's socioeconomic status, race, or religion, students who belong to historically marginalized populations seem to be especially hard hit with this addiction around the country. In Vermont, having flavored tobacco or

tobacco like products is akin to the candy cigarettes that were marketed to many of us when we were kids; the difference is we received a shot of sugar into our system and the imagery that smoking was cool, at least we were not having nicotine and the poisons that accompany nicotine ingested into our bodies. Thousands of Vermonters are getting hooked by vaping. If we really value the health and physical welfare of our students, one small step in the right direction would be to simply not allow these products into our state whatsoever. These companies are targeting children and adolescents; that is crystal clear. Let's say No to flavored tobacco and tobacco like products in Vermont and take a common sense step to protect our children.

Thank you.