

April 18, 2019

TO: Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs Committee

FROM: Jennifer Costa, ACS CAN, Government Relations Director

SUBJECT: Written Testimony on H.26

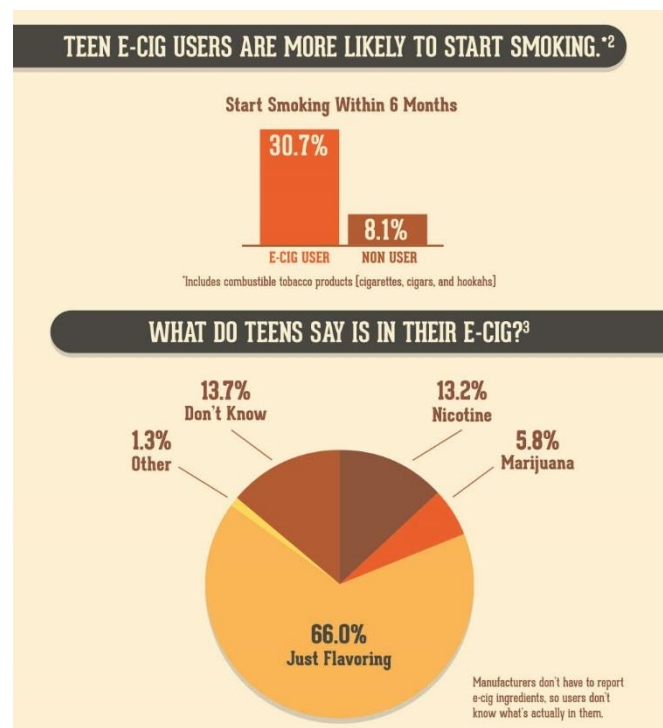
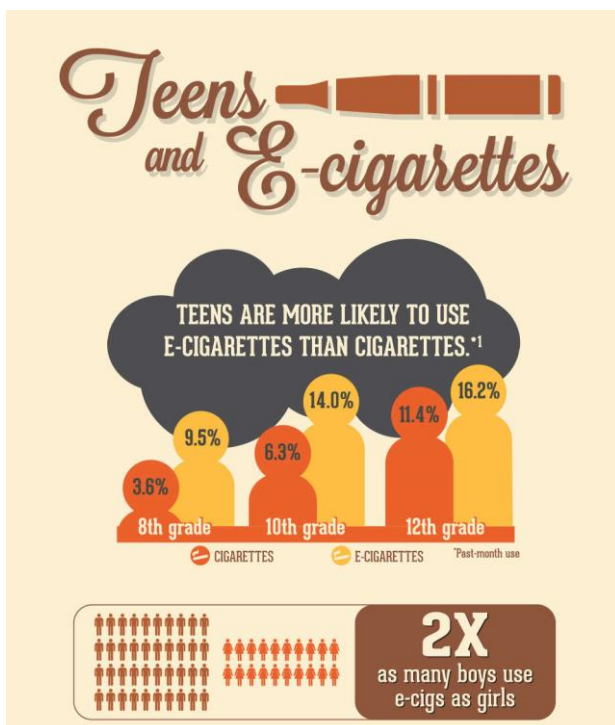
The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) supports licensing all retailers and wholesale dealers who sell any tobacco products, including e-cigarettes.

- This allows us to track how tobacco products are coming into our state and how many retailers and wholesale dealers are in the state – as well as where they are located.
- These requirements also help enforce tobacco control laws and hold licensees accountable.

Internet sales of tobacco to youth can significantly undermine efforts to protect public health. Young people are much more likely to become addicted to tobacco, in part, because adolescent brains are more sensitive to nicotine.

- Strong laws restricting the sale of tobacco products to youth play an essential role in stopping a lifetime of addiction and tobacco-related disease before it starts.
- Yet internet retailers can skirt many of the laws designed to prevent brick-and-mortar retailers from selling to kids. With the boom in popularity of e-cigarettes – a product widely available online – we support effective policies to stop the illegal online sale of tobacco to youth.

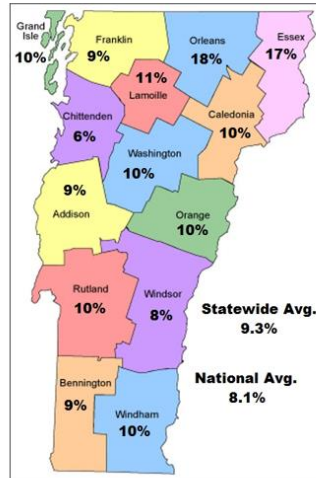
The FDA and the US Surgeon General have recently called e-cigarette use by youth a public health epidemic. In Vermont, 12% of high school students use e-cigarettes. For this reason, it is important that we update our tobacco control laws to ensure all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, are regulated in the same manner. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, teenage vapers are nearly four times more likely to start smoking, within six months, compared to children who do not vape.



And although we've made progress curbing youth smoking over the past decade, Vermont's youth smoking rate is still higher than the national average, with some Vermont counties double the national average.



Vermont Youth Smoking Rates



Over the past decade there has been a 50% decrease in the percent of students who smoked cigarettes.

18% (2007) vs. 9% (2017)

BUT Vermont's youth smoking rates remain higher than the national average; some VT counties are **double** the national average.



Federal law specifically preserves state authority to prohibit the shipment of tobacco to individual customers and personal residences within the state and Vermont is one of at least 11 states that have such a law. This bill would expand the law to capture more tobacco products.

We recommend amending the bill to include all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, under a comprehensive definition of tobacco products. We have found throughout the country that when separate terms and definitions are created, it becomes difficult to ensure all tobacco products are regulated in the same manner. Separate terms and definitions also pave the way for the tobacco industry to exempt certain products from regulation all together or to apply weaker regulation to certain products, which goes against best practices.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network supports a comprehensive approach to youth tobacco prevention.

To combat the youth e-cigarette epidemic plaguing Vermont and our nation, we must:

1. Raise the sale age of all tobacco products to 21 (including e-cigarettes).
2. Make these addicting products more expensive through an e-cigarette tax on par with traditional tobacco.
3. Restrict access to these products by prohibiting anyone from selling e-cigarettes online or shipping to anyone other than licensed retail dealers in Vermont.

We thank the Senate for passing Tobacco 21. Now we respectfully urge this committee to pass H.26 (restricting online sales) and support an e-cigarette tax (H.47).

Sincerely,
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