

For many years, the tobacco industry has targeted youth with its products to ensure it has long time, addicted customers. Things haven't changed with e-cigarettes.

Industry documents and actions highlight their desire to get youth hooked. When Terrence Sullivan, an RJ Reynolds sales representative, asked the company which young people they were targeting he got this as a response, "They got lips? We want them." And from the Lorillard Tobacco Company, "[T]he base of our business is the high school student," I found these quotes from a website called The 84 movement and they sourced the quotes to Legacy Library UCSF and tobaccodocuments.org.

I've seen just some of the impact of flavors and vaping and urge this committee to act now so more kids don't get addicted. In my first two years of high school I remember sitting in class and hearing countless conversations about vapes. Discussions over which flavors were the best, if the classmate was willing to sell any JUUL Pods and which device delivered the best head rush. One thing that sticks out the most is hearing a classmate say, "I can't get out of bed until I take a hit, I just can't get going without it." A hit refers to the act of using the vape. It's concerning that the amount of students in Vermont who report vaping daily has doubled. This is addiction.

These products have become a part of the youth culture, flavors and all. You have the ability, by passing this legislation, to remove these products from youth culture before they become too ingrained to remove. These products are very addictive because of their high nicotine content. The nicotine in one JUUL pod is equivalent to a pack of cigarettes. The result is that these products are able to hook kids easier and quicker, and the high high nicotine content makes it so hard to quit.

Whether or not to start using tobacco products is certainly a choice many face, especially when they are young and peer pressure and the need to fit in is great. But eliminating the sale of flavored tobacco lessens that pressure to start. A whole lot less youth will choose tobacco when it doesn't have the cool factor provided by flavors and menthol that are just begging kids to try them to see what they taste like.

Right now there are over 15,000 tobacco flavors on the market. Every single one of those flavors makes it easier to use tobacco products because it masks the flavor of tobacco and all of the other chemicals, metals, and toxins in the devices. I encourage you to make sure you get rid of all flavored tobacco. Don't just take an incremental step by not addressing menthol.

Getting rid of only some flavors will not stop the current vapers and tobacco users from using tobacco, nor will it prevent new youth from using tobacco in the first place. It's like when your favorite true crime TV show is no longer airing, so instead of not watching anymore true crime shows, you'll just move on to the next best true crime show because it has the same idea and theme behind it, it's still a true crime show. It's the same thing with flavors, if you take away some flavors in some forms and leave any flavors

on the market, even just one, youth are just going to move on to the next flavor available because it's still a flavor.

We need to protect our youth from the industry, because it has been aggressive in focusing on them. JUUL has purchased ads on youth-focused websites such as Cartoon Network, Nickelodeon and Seventeen Magazine. They also rejected an ad proposal that would have laid a clear foundation for an adult-centered marketing campaign. Their marketing techniques relate JUUL to identity, self-image, sex appeal and romance. And it's not just JUUL. E-cigarette companies have used scholarships, sponsored events, appealing flavors and social media to promote their products to youth. They've counted on kids to help market their products, and it's worked..There has been user-generated content that includes memes of kid's movies characters holding vapes and other memes about JUUL and other vapor products that have circulated social media.

If you can please turn your attention to the photos on the screen. Here we have Elmo telling kids that in order to be cool, they need to vape. Some memes that I was just describing. The photo on the bottom left-hand side is actually an advertisement directly from JUUL featuring a young woman showing off her vape. The bottom left and bottom right are e-cigarette ads that can be seen as youth marketing. The bottom right is a PUFF Bar ad (a disposable e-cigarette) that aired during COVID. If you pay close attention to the wording on the ad, it says that using PUFF Bars are a great way to deal with back-to-back Zoom calls and parental texts. Who would you say that's geared towards? And how is that going to teach them effective and healthy ways to deal with stress? It's telling the viewer that if they are stressed, they should use a harmful, addictive product to deal with it and the product even comes in fun flavors for everyone.

In the middle of the bottom row is an ad that was proposed to JUUL but rejected. Given all these photos I understand why JUUL and other vape companies have been so successful in getting youth to make the choice to vape. Youth are exposed to these toxic, addictive, cancer-causing devices and they have the choice in front of them to use them or to not use them. As I said before, to effectively lessen the number of youth who choose to use these products, all flavors need to go. If any flavors are still on the market, that is going to be what you will find youth using. We don't have to look too far back for an example. In 2018, when JUUL removed fruity flavors from stores following public pressure, but left mint and menthol remaining, menthol sales jumped from 51% of the market to 64%.

This bill can protect the future and present generations from these addictive products. As a youth who resents the targeting of my generation by the industry, an advocate who cares about the health of my peers, and sister who wants to protect her younger brothers, I firmly believe that the only way to end the youth vaping epidemic is by ending what is enticing youth to start – the availability of flavored tobacco products in all forms. In weighing your decision, I would encourage you to ask yourself what the reasons would be for keeping flavors on the market. And then consider the future of our youth. We deserve more than a lifetime of addiction.