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FOR LGBTQ+ YOUTH

outrightvt.org • 802-865-9677
241 N. Winooski Ave. Burlington, VT 05401

January 19, 2024

VIA EMAIL

House Committee on Human Services - Rep. Theresa Wood, Chair
Care of: Lori Morse

Remarks in favor of S.18 - An act relating to banning flavored tobacco products and e-liquids.

Dear Committee,

Outright Vermont lends its full support to S.18 - An act relating to banning flavored tobacco products and e-liquids. As the only LGBTQ+ youth-specific organization in the state, Outright Vermont is keenly aware of the disparate rates of tobacco and vapor product use among LGBTQ+ youth.

Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data has long shown the significant disparities among LGBTQ+ youth, compared with their cisgender and heterosexual (cis/het) peers, in rates of smoking. The 2021 YRBS outcomes bore out those trends once more:

2021 YRBS Health Risk	Among LGBTQ+ youth	Among Cis/Het youth
Lifetime Cigarette Use	22%	17%
Lifetime Electronic Vapor Product use	37%	32%
Lifetime use of flavored tobacco products	21%	17%
Smoked on 20 or more days in the past 30 days	30%	22%



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Smoked more than half a pack on days smoked	19%	11%
Used an Electronic Vapor Product in the past 30 days	19%	15%

These increased risks are not inherent to a person's LGBTQ identity; rather these outcomes are due to the burden of stress LGBTQ+ youth shoulder. [Minority stress perspective](#) can help us understand the disparities: **Often LGBTQ+ youth experience violence and the threat of harm daily.** Further, they experience a continuous barrage of messages that target LGBTQ+ youth, telling them they're not valued, cared for, or allowed to exist. This increases the experience of chronic, toxic stress for LGBTQ+ young people, which contributes to disparate poor health outcomes and risk factors when compared with their cisgender, heterosexual peers who do not experience those same stressors.

Critically, tobacco and electronic vaping companies have, for decades, targeted marginalized populations, often mirroring LGBTQ+ movement language in their advertising campaigns which intentionally conflate LGBTQ rights with "smokers' rights." [Materials produced by the Public Health Law Center at Mitchell Hamline School of Law](#) underscore these predatory tactics.

We encourage this committee to pass S.18, a needed hurdle to the proliferation of flavored tobacco products which only serve to make our communities less healthy and contribute to disparate health outcomes for LGBTQ+ youth in Vermont.

Sincerely,

Amanda Rohdenburg, Associate Director,
on behalf of Outright Vermont