

# FLAVORS HOOK KIDS VERMONT

## Fact Sheet and FAQs

### S.18 - A bill to end the sale of flavored tobacco products

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#### **Vermonters Overwhelmingly Support Ending the Sale of Flavored Tobacco:**

- **68% of Vermonters support a law to end the sale of flavored tobacco.**
- 79% of voters say they are concerned about young people in their community smoking cigarettes, using vapes/e-cigarettes, or other forms of tobacco.
- Nearly 80% of Vermonters say **it is more important to help prevent young people from getting addicted to tobacco** by removing flavored tobacco products from store shelves, than to protect retail sales.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Tobacco Companies Target Kids with Flavors:**

- The rise in menthol cigarette use **was a product of intense, persistent, and highly skilled targeting by Big Tobacco of Black people, women, youth, and other populations.**<sup>2</sup>
- Nearly 50% of youth who smoke cigarettes use menthol.<sup>3</sup>
- E-cigarette flavors like tutti frutti, mango, cotton candy, and mint are directly targeted at kids.

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<sup>1</sup> [Campaign for Tobacco Free Vermont. Poll. December 2023](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Stanford Medicine. ADVERTISING CREATED & CONTINUES TO DRIVE THE MENTHOL TOBACCO MARKET: Methods Used by The Industry to Target Youth, Women, & Black Americans](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Wang TW, Gentzke AS, Creamer MR, et al. Tobacco Product Use and Associated Factors Among Middle and High School Students — United States, 2019. MMWR Surveill Summ 2019;68 \(No. SS-12\):1–22. DOI:](#)

- The tobacco industry spends \$15.8 million per year on marketing in Vermont<sup>4</sup>.

#### **Youth Ages 12-17 are the Highest Users of Flavored Tobacco Products, including Menthols:**

- 54% of youth smokers start by using menthol.<sup>5</sup>
- 64% of them say they would quit if menthol wasn't available.
- E-cigarettes remained the most commonly used tobacco product among youths. Among middle school and high school students who currently use e-cigarettes, 89.4% used flavored e-cigarettes.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Menthol Hooks Kids and Adults:**

- Menthol makes starting easier and quitting harder. It allows for a deeper smoke because it eliminates the harshness of tobacco. This also makes it harder to quit.
- Menthol cigarettes impede adult smoking cessation.<sup>7</sup>

#### **The Health of VT Kids is at Risk**

- Tobacco product use during adolescence **increases the risk for lifelong nicotine addiction and adverse health consequences.**
- Using nicotine in adolescence can harm the parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, and impulse control.

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<sup>4</sup> [Tobacco Free Kids - The Toll of Tobacco in Vermont](#)

<sup>5</sup> [2023 Youth Tobacco Survey](#)

<sup>6</sup> [2023 Youth Tobacco Survey](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Andrea Villanti, PhD, MPH Associate Professor Vermont Center on Behavior and Health. testimony to Vermont Legislature January 10, 2023](#)

- Young people's brains build synapses faster than adult brains. Nicotine changes the way these synapses are formed and creates a lifelong propensity for addiction among users who start when they are young.<sup>8</sup>
- The annual cost of tobacco-related diseases in Vermont is estimated at \$404 million, the Medicaid cost to the State is estimated at \$93.7 million<sup>9</sup>.

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**FAQs:**

**Have other states done this?**

- Five states: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, New York, and California have laws on the books that prohibit the sale of flavored e-cigarettes<sup>10</sup>. Massachusetts and California also ended the sale of menthol cigarettes and all other flavored tobacco products..
- Massachusetts passed their restriction in 2019, ending the sale of flavored tobacco products including menthol. More retailers opened in Massachusetts in the year after the ban than in the year prior.
- Youth and adult consumption of flavored tobacco decreased.
- Youth and adult consumption of tobacco decreased.<sup>11</sup>

**Will there be an impact on Vermont businesses?**

- MA saw an increase in the # of retailers after the law passed.
- 80% of voters in Vermont believe it is more important to protect kids from becoming addicted to tobacco than to save money for retailers.

**Why include menthol?**

- Menthol cigarettes are the only remaining flavored cigarettes.
- Flavored products initiate new users - kids - and hook them with nicotine addiction.
- Youth 12-17 are the highest users of menthol cigarettes. 54% of youth smokers start by using menthol.
- Banning menthol and flavors in tobacco/e-cigarette products would reduce the number of youth who start smoking, reduce the overall number of tobacco users and benefit public health.<sup>12</sup>
- The high use of menthol is a direct result of predatory targeting by Big Tobacco Companies, and the health of Black Vermonters, youth, women, and other groups is directly impacted.

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<sup>8</sup> [Center for Disease Control. Quick Facts on the Risks of E-cigarettes for Kids, Teens, and Young Adults](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Tobacco Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Vermont](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Tobacco Free Kids Fact Sheets](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Massachusetts Point-of-Sale Tobacco Policy. Impact of Flavored Tobacco Restriction Policies on the Retail Environment](#)

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<sup>12</sup> [Andrea Villanti, PhD. MPH Associate Professor Vermont Center on Behavior and Health. testimony to Vermont Legislature January 10, 2023](#)

# FLAVORS HOOK KIDS VERMONT

## 50 Trusted Vermont

### Organizations Support S.18:

American Academy of Pediatrics  
Vermont Chapter  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action  
Network  
American College of Cardiology  
American Heart Association  
American Lung Association  
Blue Cross Blue Shield  
Boys & Girls Club of Greater Vergennes  
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids  
Care Partners Adult Day Center  
Central Vermont Medical Center  
City of Winooski  
Coalition for a Tobacco Free Vermont  
Dad Guild  
Greater Burlington YMCA  
Interfaith Public Health Network  
Lamoille Family Center/Healthy Lamoille  
Valley  
Meeting Waters Vermont  
Mosaic Vermont  
Northwest Medical Center  
Outright Vermont  
Porter Medical Center  
Preventing Tobacco Addiction  
Foundation/Tobacco 21  
Prevention Works VT!

Recovery VT/The Vermont Association of  
Mental Health & Addiction Recovery  
SHAPE Vermont  
The Collaborative Prevention Coalition  
Town of Weybridge  
United Way of Addison County  
United Way of Northwest Vermont  
University of Vermont Children's Hospital  
University of Vermont Health Network  
University of Vermont Health Network  
Medical Group  
University of Vermont Medical Center  
Vermont Academy of Family Physicians  
Vermont Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs  
Vermont Association of Hospitals and  
Health Systems  
Vermont Businesses for Social  
Responsibility  
Vermont Center for Cardiovascular and  
Brain Health  
Vermont Dental Society  
Vermont Medical Society  
Vermont Moms  
Vermont-NEA  
Vermont Principals' Association  
Vermont Public Health Association  
Vermont School Boards Association  
Vermont State School Nurses  
Association  
Vermont State Youth Council  
Voices for Vermont's Children  
Windham NAACP  
YMCA Alliance of Northern New England

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