

Hello State Representatives,

My name is Michael A. Hill, Jr. I am an Alcohol, Cannabis, and Other Drugs (ACOD) Health and Wellness Educator at the University of Vermont (UVM). I have been in this role for almost 5 years and have been doing this type of work for almost 9 years in the state of Vermont. I've held the role of Student Assistance Program Counselor and community-based program Coordinator, and in all three of these roles, I have witnessed the impact of vaping and tobacco use on our youth and young adults. Thus, this is why I am writing you today. I am writing to you today to ask you to please support Bill S. 18! Please support the future health of our future (our youth and young adults).

From working with youth in the community and them indicating that it is "too difficult" for them to quit vaping right now because they are dealing with too much stress all the way to assisting high school students in trying to quit vaping while they are surrounded by their peers continued use and encouragement to keep on using. These are children between the ages of 12-18; yes, I have worked with some who are 21, but believe me, these individuals still started before they turned the legal age of use. The majority of the time, it is the 21-plus individuals who have been using since high school or right when they started college at the ages of 17-19.

In addition to all this, I am also writing to you as a Black person. I am naming this because I work very closely with my communities of color, and I can state confidently that the insidiousness of Menthol flavoring has done its job in this majority rural state as much as it continues to do its job in urban states. Flavored tobacco and vape juice do not discriminate, and our youth and young adults are experiencing the direct impact of this. Again, I implore you to support Bill S.18 and end the sale of flavored tobacco in the state of Vermont.

Best regards,  
Mike Hill, Jr.

In challenging times, community and connection can be a touchstone for support. It's essential to our health and well-being to continue to engage in self-compassion and the community we have cultivated for ourselves. Staying involved in self-care and community care is the greatest form of being productive.

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