

Dear Chair Kornheiser and Ways and Means Committee Members,

I understand that S.18 has been passed into Ways and Means Committee. I am forwarding my previous email below as submitted to the Health and Service Committee Members as suggested by Theresa Wood. I had been invited to submit it as written testimony but I believe I missed that opportunity. I would like to urge you, as the Committee, to continue to strongly consider the impact of exempting oral tobacco products such as chew and nicotine pouches (i.e. Zynies) from S.18. Pure tobacco products taste horrible, adding flavors is purely a business decision to increase product sales and revenue. Flavors such as menthol help to hide the smell/taste, but fun fruity and soda pop flavors are clearly intended to attract young consumers and establish a chemical dependency/addiction that can last a lifetime.

Dear Health and Services Committee Members:

I am writing to urge you to STRONGLY support S.18 and ban the sale of flavored tobacco products in the State of Vermont.

I was originally going to write and focus on Vermont's Youth Risk Survey (most recently from 2021, [PowerPoint Presentation \(healthvermont.gov\)](https://www.healthvermont.gov)) that shows that middle and high school students are using tobacco, especially flavored tobacco products at high rates. Further the study reinforces (in Vermont) that BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ youth, some of our highest risk youth, are more likely to use tobacco products when they are flavored. We can all agree that increasing risky behaviors among youth is bad.

But then, I spent time with my 17 and 18year old nephews. Without intending to, they introduced me to "Upper Deckie Lip Pillies", a term that was completely new to me. Without missing a beat, they pulled up several different threads on TikTok and explained the trend is to use "upper deckie lip pillies" aka Zynies (Brand: ZYN) aka nicotine pouches to get a nicotine high. Quincy, the 18 year-old with severe asthma, explained that his friends will challenge each other to put as many pouches as they can stand in their lips at a time to get high. These pouches can contain anywhere from 3 to 12mg of nicotine per pouch. 12mg is approximately equal to ½ a pack of cigarettes. The 21mg nicotine patch for nicotine replacement therapy prescribed for smoking cessation is dispense over 24 hours. These kids are consuming, in a 12mg ZYN, the equivalent of ½ a pack of cigarettes multiple times a day!

Further, Quincy relayed his friends prefer the mint flavors. He often sees kids walking around his college campus with green, royal blue, and baby blue pouches on their upper lip. He immediately directed me to www.Nicokick.com, a website that requires one to attest they are 21yr before entering. This website ranks the 10 most popular flavors: wintergreen, spearmint, cool mint, citrus, peppermint, cinnamon, smooth, chill, coffee, and menthol. It also includes the five flavors it is hoping to bring to the US market this year including, "Berry. Who doesn't love a summer berry? Whether it's strawberry, raspberry or blueberry – there are so many berries to give the sweet tooth ZYN lovers a new ZYN flavor they could only dream of." And "Soda. Lemonade, Cola, Root Beer...The list of sodas could go on. Creating a soda flavored ZYN would five that comforting, familiar flavor to enhance your nicotine experience."

Flavored tobacco products are clearly being marketed to adolescents and young adults. They are marketed to sell flavors that, if consumed, will help kids be seen as cool/increase

popularity. The flavors are clearly being created to hide the awful taste of nicotine. The products are designed for high rates of nicotine consumption that leads to physical dependence and then addiction. The health risks related to tobacco/nicotine have been clearly documented and are evidence-based. Please, support the ban on flavored tobacco in Vermont.

Sincerely,

Anne Morris
Mother
Concerned Aunt
Family Physician
President, Vermont Academy of Family Physicians