



If its about the money, ...then pass S.18

The tobacco industry would like lawmakers to believe that passing legislation to eliminate the sale of menthol and flavored tobacco is about the money.

To some extent that's true. The cost to Vermont is great by not acting to prevent the sale of this huge lure that hooks kids, makes long-term addicted customers and results in an enormous financial drain on Vermont while the industry profits.

Tobacco and flavors are costly to Vermont:

The annual cost of treating tobacco-caused illnesses in Vermont has risen from \$348 million to \$404 million annually, with \$93 million in direct Medicaid expenditures – **a state and federal tax burden of \$1,307 per household.**

1000 adults die every year in Vermont from tobacco use. Nearly a quarter of Vermont high school seniors vape and middle school is where use is growing the fastest.

The Vermont Principals Association fully supports this legislation because of the cost to youth, teachers, administrators and learning in Vermont schools. The impact of the vaping epidemic includes: principals on guard outside of bathrooms, students anxious and disruptive in class, athletes being compromised, and addicted kids who want to quit but are struggling. As school nurses and SAP counselors have testified, "Our students are suffering. Their grades are suffering. Education has become secondary."

Vermont should not build a budget with funds from kids addicted to tobacco.

This is dirty money. We don't want to build Vermont's state budget on sales of flavored tobacco products coming largely from kids who are addicted to nicotine because of industry marketing. Instead, we should be helping them to quit by passing S.18 and fully funding the Tobacco Control Program.

Tobacco industry revenue is coming to the state that is largely NOT being used for prevention, and therefore, only helping the industry's bottom line.

In September 2022, [the Vermont Attorney General's Office joined with 33 state in a \\$438.5 million agreement with JUUL](#). Under the terms of the agreement, **the state of Vermont will receive approximately \$8 million over a period of six to ten years.**

Vermont also annually receives millions of dollars from the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) with the tobacco industry. **\$26 million in MSA funds came to Vermont last year.** But only \$2 million were spent on tobacco prevention.

The loss of jobs is a scare tactic, and did not happen elsewhere.

Evidence shows this legislation will NOT lead tobacco retailers and convenient stores to close as people will go to neighboring states for their flavored products.

Data from the department of health in Massachusetts shows the number of both convenience stores and retail tobacco licenses have increased since the law took effect there. In February 2020, there were 6,258 tobacco retailers (of which 3,767 were convenience stores), and as of April 2022, there were 6,491 tobacco retailers (including 3,994 convenience stores). When tobacco users quit, the money spent on tobacco products in state retail stores does not disappear from the economy but simply shifts to consumer spending on other products or services.