

Hello,

I'm reaching out to ask for your support to help the next generation of Vermonters. In my professional role I work closely with youth, parents, and local service providers in Burlington and CVSD school districts. Closer to home I am the parent of two teenagers in the Essex Westford School District. In all three districts I have been seeing and hearing about the havoc that flavored tobacco products are causing for our kids. The flavors mask the harsh bitterness of the nicotine and make it easier for people to start using and harder for them to quit. My own teens have avoided the school bathroom because it is often full of the sweet smells of kids who now can't make it through a class without a hit on their vape device. My kids have been offered vapes in social groups and had videos of people vaping fruity flavors promoted at them aggressively online.

Nearly 81% of youth ages 12 to 17 who had ever used a tobacco product reported that the first product they used was flavored ([source](#)). We are also seeing that while middle and high school teens are generally starting their use with electronic nicotine vaping devices, by their early young adult years most are moving on to traditional cigarettes.

I work in the substance use prevention field and 10 years ago we were all getting excited by the fact that tobacco use initiation had dropped so much we thought we might be able to get to a generation of non smokers... and then tobacco companies changed tactics and started heavily pushing the vaping devices and youth-friendly flavors. My kids and other Vermonters should be able to grow up in an environment where they don't have to worry about substance use being promoted to them everywhere they turn. Please help us make VT a place where kids can be kids. Don't let the tobacco companies shape the ending to this story.

Thank you for all you do.

Take care,

Mariah Flynn

Essex Junction resident