
Tobacco Free Mass

Massachusetts Coalition for a Healthy Future

The Honorable Susan Moran, Senate Chair
The Honorable Tackey Chan, House Chair
Joint Committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure
State House, Room 506
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairs Moran and Chan:

When the Massachusetts Legislature took the bold step of stopping the sale of flavored tobacco products in the Commonwealth, it greatly reduced the attractiveness of tobacco products to young people. The Legislature has passed thoughtful, innovative tobacco control policy that protects young people from the tobacco industry's tactics. The laws were intentionally written to include all types of tobacco products under the law.

Tobacco Free Mass opposes legislation that would weaken our Commonwealth's comprehensive tobacco law. SB 2536, *An Act relative to small businesses and the sale of certain cultural products*, would weaken the law by providing exemptions from the flavor provision.

Flavored tobacco is designed to attract young people. Flavored vapes, cigarettes, hookah, and cigars look harmless and familiar to kids while hiding the bad taste of tobacco. In fact, 80% of Massachusetts' high school youth who were current tobacco users reported using a flavored tobacco product in the past 30 days (Massachusetts Youth Health Survey, 2017).

Allowing even one product type an exemption to the flavor provision would substantially weaken the law and would set us back years in our efforts to protect young people from the tobacco industry.

Because of the commitment of the Legislature, Massachusetts is the first state in the nation to protect its young people by banning the sale of all types of flavored tobacco products. This legislation is an example also because of its forward-thinking definitions, which encompass new types of products and make it unnecessary to continually change the law to catch up. Any exemptions in this law will weaken it considerably and undermine the very public health protections it has established.

We ask that you remain firm on your commitment to protecting young people from the tobacco industry and refuse to pass SB 2536, a harmful bill that would weaken Massachusetts' landmark tobacco law.

Sincerely,



Gwendolyn M. Stewart
Executive Director, Tobacco Free Mass

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