

Thank you Commissioner Hall for taking the time to hold this public hearing on this issue which so many people are so passionate about. I applaud the governor's desire to reduce youth vaping rates, but oppose her methods and that is what we are here to discuss today.

My name is Stephen Knight, and I am from Grand Rapids, Michigan. I am the owner of Vapejoose, Inc., an e-liquid manufacturer and retailer. I employ over 30 people, both full time and part time. I started creating flavored e-liquid as a way to help my girlfriend quit smoking. I created tobacco flavors, fruity flavors, pastry flavors, and menthol flavors for her to try and end her cigarette addiction. The flavor that finally worked for her was a Watermelon flavor. We're now married and two have kids who get to enjoy a mother who has successfully quit smoking cigarettes and nicotine all together. Every customer has a different preference on which flavor will help them transition away from combustibles and less than 2% of our customers currently use our tobacco flavored e-liquids.

From the beginning of Vapejoose my goal has always been to switch customers from traditional cigarettes to a nicotine replacement that actually works and has the ability to step-down the nicotine level so that you can begin to wean off nicotine and vaping entirely. We have received thousands of personal testimonies from customers who claim one specific flavor is the only thing that has worked for them after trying patches, pills, gums, tobacco flavored cigalikes, and even different flavors of e-liquid.

From 2014-2016 Vapejoose developed over 100 flavors which each has helped tens of thousands of customers quit using combustible cigarettes. In 2016 the FDA released regulations that prevented us from continuing to innovate and find new flavors that could convert more cigarette smokers.

Since 2016, we have complied with every regulation that the FDA has put in place, including a strict age restriction, registering all of our products, recipes, and marketing materials with the FDA, and changing all of our packaging to child resistant bottles. On top of that, although it was not required, we purchased an ISO 6 clean room for all of our manufacturing to ensure that our product was pure and free from any contaminants. We changed all of our product labels to remove any artwork that referenced food and drink items and added large warnings to our labels and our marketing.

From the beginning we've treated e-liquid as an adult product that was only accessible to individuals over the age of 18 even before age restriction laws existed. In fact, the last time I was in front of this committee was to testify in favor of rules designed to reduce youth vaping by making it illegal for youth to possess alternative nicotine products.

We believe strongly that adults need to retain access to flavored nicotine products that are manufactured and marketed in a safe and responsible manner. My fear is that the proposed emergency rules will cause a drastic rise in the black market availability of unsafe and unreliably manufactured products with no oversight from any regulatory agency and may revert many individuals to combustible cigarettes or cause additional and unnecessary harm to the end user.

I strongly encourage this committee to reject the rules as proposed and I invite members of this committee and the Governor's office to work with responsible e-liquid manufacturers to determine a set of reasonable rules that prevent youth access to nicotine products while still allowing adults to have an offramp from combustible cigarettes.

Thank you for your time.