

## Written Testimony in opposition to SB177 and SB273

To Whom it May Concern,

These senate bills will restrict our ability to use lower-risk alternatives to smoking. I smoked cigarettes from when I was 16 until I was 35 years old. At 35, I was instructed by my doctor that if I did not cut out tobacco cigarettes, I would certainly shorten my lifespan by at least 20-30 years. At the young age of 35 years, I had already developed high blood pressure and difficulty breathing when climbing a standard set of stairs or walking a long distance. I was not able to run or compete in sports as well. This was due to the damage that cigarette smoke and tar did to my lungs.

Immediately following this dismal meeting with my doctor, I began exploring options to assist getting off of Nicotine and the addictive, and dangerous habit of Tobacco smoking. In my research, I tried patches which made me sick and burned my skin, and I also tried Nicorette Gum which also made me nauseous. After those failed Nicotine Replacement Therapies, I found a local vape shop who guided me towards a replacement that would help kick the habit. This vape shop, checked my ID at the door and put me onto a Strawberry flavor eliquid with a medium level of nicotine of 12mg. They also guided me with a plan to reduce my dependence on nicotine and within 4 years, I reduced my nicotine usage to 0mg. Meaning that I was no longer physically addicted to nicotine, I only had one part of the habit to quit which was the hand to mouth habit. I am now almost 40 and happy to say that I have not smoked in over 4 years and I have not vaped in about a month. Vaping saved my life. I can compete in sports again. Within a couple years of not smoking I was able to Jog again.

Cigarettes kill 1300 US citizens every day. In Europe, that mortality rate number was also very high due to tobacco related illness, but the Royal Physicians of England through science have convinced the government to create programs along with doctors to switch people from cigarettes to vape. It is truly a matter of life or death for many people. Banning flavors and limiting adult access to vapor products is bad for public health. What would be better is to enforce the current laws in place regarding Identifications at points of sale. Hold businesses accountable who sell to minors. Prohibition is never the answer especially with a recognized Tobacco Harm Reduction product.

The government should be promoting vaping as a valuable tool in the fight against cancer causing cigarettes.

Thanks

Ryan Silva