



July 17, 2020

The Honorable Jerry Hill
 Senator, 13th District
 State Capitol, Room 5035
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re.: Senate Bill 793

Dear Senator Hill:

On behalf of the organizations signed on to this letter we are writing to express our support for SB 793, which will help protect youth from the harms of flavored tobacco products.

We are in the midst of an e-cigarette epidemic of unparalleled proportions. Tobacco companies have pushed candy-flavored products into the youth market, quietly hooking kids into a dangerous addiction to nicotine.

Current events have highlighted these dangers. There is growing evidence that smokers are at a greater risk of hospitalization and severe illness due to COVID-19, placing smokers in the high-risk category. Smoking increases the risk for respiratory infections, weakens the immune system and is a major cause of a number of chronic health conditions, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart disease and diabetes. In addition, there is growing evidence that vaping can also harm lung health. These factors put smokers, and in all likelihood vapers as well, at greater risk when confronted with the coronavirus.

Long before this novel coronavirus arrived, California youth were being sentenced to a lifetime of addiction as the skyrocketing youth use of e-cigarettes swept the nation. In November 2018, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported a dramatic increase in youth nicotine use, leading the Surgeon General and the FDA to declare youth e-cigarette use an epidemic in the United States. The disturbing rates of teen e-cigarette use continued to rise in 2019, with more than 1 in 4 high school students and more than 1 in 10 middle school students using e-cigarettes. Altogether, more than 5.3 million youth were current e-cigarette users in 2019, with the overwhelming majority of youth citing use of popular fruit and menthol or mint flavors.

81 percent of young people who have ever used tobacco started with a flavored product. These products often mimic popular candies, drinks, or snacks in both packaging and flavor, making them particularly appealing to youth. A variety of flavored tobacco products like cotton candy, bubble gum, and mango are widely available on retail shelves. 72 percent of youth tobacco users have used a flavored tobacco product in the past month and at least two-thirds of youth tobacco users report using tobacco products “because they come in flavors I like.”

With the surges in youth nicotine usage and associated public health risks, California needs to take swift action. While the FDA recently announced a partial ban on certain flavored electronic cigarette products, the policy does not go far enough to protect the health and safety of California children by making dangerous exemptions. It is time for California to lead the nation by passing SB 793 to end the sale of all flavored tobacco products.

For these reasons, we are proud to support SB 793.

Sincerely,

African American Tobacco Control
Leadership Council

African Communities Public Health Coalition

Alameda County Tobacco Education
Coalition

American Academy of Pediatrics, California
Chapter

American Cancer Society Cancer Action
Network

American College of Cardiology - California
Chapter

American Heart Association

American Lung Association

Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights

Anti-Vaping Alliance
Association of California Healthcare Districts
Association of California School Administrators
Association of Northern California Oncologists
Bay Area Community Health Advisory Council
Black Arts Los Angeles, Inc
Black Caucus of Health Workers
Breast Cancer Prevention Partners
BREATHE California, Sacramento Region
BREATHE California of Los Angeles County
California Academy of Family Physicians
California Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs
California Black Health Network
California Children's Hospital Association
California Dental Association
California Optometric Association
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
California School-Based Health Alliance
California Society of Addictive Medicine
California State Parent Teacher Association
CALPIRG
Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids
Change for Justice
City of Berkeley
City of Oakland
City of Palo Alto
City of San Leandro
Coalition of Lavender-Americans on Smoking and Health
Coastal Communities Drug Free Coalition
Common Sense Kids Action
Community Action Service Advocacy
Community Coalition
County Health Executives Association of California
County of Contra Costa
County of Santa Clara
CVS Health
Cynthia Perry Ray Foundation
Emphysema Foundation of America
Equality California
First 5 Association of California
Flavors Addict Kids – Livermore
G.R.E.E.N. Foundation
Greentech Education and Employment
Health Access
Health Officers Association of California
International Youth Tobacco Control
Kaiser Permanente
L.A. Families Fighting Flavored Tobacco
Latino Coalition for a Healthy California
Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford
Parents Against Vaping E-Cigarettes

Providence St. Joseph Health
Public Health Advocates
Public Health Institute
Riverside County Black Chamber of
Commerce
San Francisco Tobacco Free Coalition
San Marcos Prevention Coalition
San Mateo County Tobacco Education
Coalition

Santa Cruz County Tobacco Education
Coalition
State Superintendent of Public Instruction,
Tony Thurmond
Sierra Club
Thirdhand Smoke Resource Center
Tobacco and Vape Free OC Coalition
Vista Community Clinic
Wellness & Prevention Center