
From: Danyell Payan [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 29, 2022 12:25 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Please vote NO to a New Tax Hike on Vapor Products!

Dear Representative Merrick,

I'm writing to ask you to vote NO on SB 45. Adult vapor consumers are demonized enough and don't deserve to keep being punished. Any new tax hike, especially on consumer goods like vapor products, will hurt families already facing higher prices on other consumer goods.

Please vote no on SB 45.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,
Danyell Payan

[REDACTED]
Wasilla, AK 99654

From: Tracy Peters <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, April 29, 2022 4:03 PM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Please vote NO to a New Tax Hike on Vapor Products!

Dear Representative Merrick,

I'm writing to ask you to vote NO on SB 45. Adult vapor consumers are demonized enough and don't deserve to keep being punished. Any new tax hike, especially on consumer goods like vapor products, will hurt families already facing higher prices on other consumer goods.

Please vote no on SB 45.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,
Tracy Peters

[REDACTED]
Anchorage, AK 99516

From: Alyssa Keill [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 02, 2022 4:56 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support SB 45

Legislators,

I understand you are considering legislation on electronic cigarettes and I just wanted to share my thoughts.

As a part-time swim coach, I'm concerned with youth use of electronic cigarettes and the unknown health risks that are associated with them. My middle-school-age swimmers have told me that some of the vapes that kids in their schools use have 6000 puffs in them. No child should be exposed to that much nicotine, and I am in favor of legislation that makes their access to such things more difficult.

I believe we can do better in protecting yet another generation of Alaska's youth from this terrible addiction.

Thank you,
Alyssa Keill

From: George Stewart [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 29, 2022 5:13 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Taxing e-cigs

PLEASE - VOTE in FAVOR of Taxing E-cigarettes (it passed SB45) -- this legislation is critical to protect the health of teen-agers.

They are highly toxic and addicting. Passing this legislation is VERY IMPORTANT to protect teens (and make a little more money for the State)

George L Stewart, MD

From: Lessens_Kelly <Lessens_Kelly@asdk12.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 28, 2022 10:11 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Support for SB 45

Dear members of the House Finance Committee,

I'm writing to you tonight in support of SB 45, which I understand you will discuss on Friday.

Although the Anchorage School Board has not taken a formal position on this bill, [student wellness](#) is a Legislative priority.

As an individual member of the Board, I can share that I'm personally concerned about the short term implications of vaping on student health and student outcomes, as well as the long term health implications of tobacco use for our state and community as a whole.

It's my understanding that SB 45 increases the age of tobacco purchase to align with Federal law, taxes e-cigarettes, and decreases the fines for possession. I encourage you to send a strong message to the tobacco industry by insisting that our young people should not be considered easy targets for their highly addictive, flavored nicotine delivery systems.

According to the American Heart Association, [one in four high school students](#) nationwide reports having used e-cigarettes, and many adolescents believe these products are safe. [In Anchorage, as of 2017, 18% of teenagers reported having tried e-cigs](#); that number could well be higher now. But despite their cheerful colors and flavors, these devices can deliver higher concentrations of nicotine than cigarettes themselves. Nicotine is highly addictive, so it should not be a surprise that e-cigarettes have been shown to be "the [most consequential factor](#) in cigarette initiation at the population level" and may have an outsized association of use among otherwise low-risk youth.

When I think about the educational implications of students who may be addicted to nicotine, I worry about student focus and time on task during the school day, as nicotine affects memory and attention. I also worry about the [hundreds of students who are suspended for tobacco possession across the state of Alaska, and the educational and life impacts of those suspensions](#). I think, too, about the long-term health implications for newly-addicted students' lives and for their families, and I think about the economic costs that our community bears because of those adverse outcomes.

Thank you for moving SB 45 forward, and thank you for your service.

Sincerely,
Kelly Lessens

From: Don Enslow <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, April 27, 2022 4:50 PM
To: House Finance
Cc: Sen. Gary Stevens
Subject: Please Support and Pass SB 45

My name is Don Enslow and I live in Anchorage, Alaska. My father passed away with lung cancer in 1987 as a chain smoker and I am a Stage 4 Colon Cancer survivor. As someone who understands the effects of smoking and the potential impacts to individual health I am a proponent of passing SB 45 to assure that individuals do not have access to tobacco products; to include e-cigarettes; until they are 21 years of age. The negative health impact of e-cigarettes and vaping has been proven to have a negative health impact on youth and young adults. An individual that is younger than 21 and is still biologically maturing to adulthood is more affected by this exposure. This is a very critical decision in promoting the health and welfare of your constituents. Your consideration and passing of this legislation is very important and I appreciate your support of this bill.

Thanks for the opportunity to share my views and please support and PASS SB 45.

Don Enslow
Anchorage Alaska

From: Steven Greenhut <sgreenhut@rstreet.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2022 10:53 AM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Statement on SB 45

Here is a statement from the R Street Institute regarding SB 45:

While we applaud lawmakers' decision to remove the flavor ban, which could have had unintentional consequences for adult smokers who find flavors helpful in making the switch to lower risk e-cigarettes, we remain concerned about the 45% *Ad Valorem Tax* on vapor products. In communities with pre-existing local taxes on vapor products, this would increase taxation of vapor products to as much as 194% of that imposed on combustible cigarettes.

Taxing electronic cigarettes and other reduced risk tobacco products at higher rates than combustible cigarettes will discourage consumers from transitioning to these less dangerous alternatives and potentially drive individuals who have traded smoking for vaping to switch back. As such, we strongly advocate for [risk-proportionate taxation](#).

Best regards,

Steven Greenhut
Western region director
R Street Institute

From: Courtney Moore <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 4:29 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: Proposed vaping tax

To whom it may concern,

I think this proposed tax is ridiculous and excessive. It's a bad idea that's going to result in countless deaths from people being forced to return to cigarettes. It's disgusting. Please protect your constituents that you promised to protect.

Courtney Moore

[REDACTED]
Alaskan 37 years, mother of 3

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 8:56 AM
To: Rep. Kelly Merrick
Subject: Oppose Senate Bill 45

Dear Representative Merrick:

I am writing due to serious concerns with Senate Bill 45, which taxes electronic smoking products at the rate of 45% of the wholesale price.

A decline in retail sales due to the imposition of a vape tax would lead to job losses and even eventually store closures. This is not an exaggeration, but a very probable outcome. Alaskan retailers would not be able to replace the lost sales of electronic smoking products with other products, leading to the demise of retail stores.

If the intent is to discourage underage vaping, you should know that underage use of cigarettes and tobacco products is at historic lows, federal law makes it illegal nationwide to sell tobacco products to anyone under 21, and the FDA has removed almost 7 million flavored electronic and nicotine vapor products from the market to keep them away from youth. These laws should be allowed to work to further reduce underage use of vapor products.

Many adult customers consider electronic smoking products to be a positive alternative to traditional, combustible cigarettes. Because electronic cigarettes heat liquid containing nicotine rather than burn tobacco, they do not share the same health-related characteristics associated with traditional cigarettes, and current scientific information strongly supports that these products offer a consumer a high level of harm reduction. From a retailer's perspective, it seems counterproductive to impose a tax on less harmful vapor products when adult smokers should not be discouraged from using them.

I urge you to oppose SB45. Thank you for protecting retail businesses in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Debbie Stotts

[REDACTED]
Wasilla, AK 99654-6922