



February 18, 2020

The Honorable Steven Horsford
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Horsford:

We are writing to express our strong support for H.R. 2339, the Reversing the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act of 2019. This legislation will protect Nevada's kids by addressing the current youth e-cigarette epidemic that is undermining the progress made in reducing youth tobacco use. We urge you cosponsor this bill and support it when it comes to the floor of the House of Representatives.

Use of e-cigarettes by youth has escalated rapidly in recent years, placing a new generation at risk of nicotine addiction and tobacco use. Between 2017 and 2019, e-cigarette use more than doubled among high school students (from 11.7% to 27.5%) and tripled among middle school students (from 3.3% to 10.5%). More than 5.3 million middle and high school students used e-cigarettes in 2019, an alarming increase of more than 3 million in two years. In Nevada, 15.5% of high school students used e-cigarettes in 2017. If national trends are any indication, that number has likely risen in the past two years.

Use of other tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars and hookah, is also a serious problem. Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States and is responsible for approximately \$170 billion in health care costs each year.

The Reversing the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act provides a much-needed response to this serious public health problem. Its prohibition on flavored tobacco products, including flavored e-cigarettes, flavored cigars, and menthol cigarettes, is needed to stop tobacco companies from targeting and addicting kids with enticing flavors, such as gummy bear and cotton candy. Flavors mask the harsh taste of tobacco and make it easier for kids to start to use a tobacco product and to become addicted.

The bill's prohibition on flavored e-cigarettes is all the more important because the Administration's recently released policy on flavored e-cigarettes will leave thousands of flavored e-liquids and devices on the market. Flavors are a key reason for widespread youth use of e-cigarettes. Ninety-seven percent of current youth e-cigarette users have used a flavored e-cigarette in the past month, and seven out of ten said they used e-cigarettes "because they come in flavors I like."

The bill's prohibition on menthol cigarettes, flavored cigars, and other flavored tobacco products will also help protect kids and public health. More than half of youth smokers – and seven in ten African American youth smokers – smoke menthol cigarettes. As a result of decades of pervasive tobacco

industry marketing, 85 percent of African-American smokers smoke menthol cigarettes, and menthol is a likely contributor to the higher rates of tobacco-caused death and disease experienced by African Americans. A 2013 Food and Drug Administration (FDA) analysis concluded that menthol cigarettes increase youth initiation, increase nicotine addiction, and make it harder for smokers to quit. Cigars are also available in a wide variety of flavors that make them more attractive to kids. More than one million high school students smoke cigars.

In addition to its prohibition on flavored tobacco products, the Reversing the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act includes a number of other provisions that will help to reduce youth use of e-cigarettes and use of other tobacco products, including prohibiting online sales of most tobacco products, addressing inappropriate marketing and advertising, and ensuring that FDA will promptly implement the graphic health warnings on cigarette packs and advertising that are required under the 2009 Tobacco Control Act.

Youth use of e-cigarettes and other tobacco products is a problem that will not resolve itself. It will require action by Congress. The Reversing the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act provides the comprehensive response that is needed. On behalf of Nevada's kids, we urge you to support this important legislation when it comes to the House floor.

Sincerely,

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

American Heart Association

American Lung Association in Nevada

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

Nevada Cancer Coalition

Nevada Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Nevada State Association of School Nurses

Nevada State Medical Association

Nevada Tobacco Prevention Coalition