



Testimony on HB 513
Amanda Turner, Executive Director
Tobacco 21
Dublin, OH
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Chairman Blessing and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee:

My name is Amanda Turner and I represent the organization Tobacco 21, based in Dublin, Ohio. We work across the country on policies to prevent tobacco retailer access to kids.

I am also here as a resident of Ohio and more importantly, as a mom. On behalf of my organization, I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on a potential proposal to HB 513 that would preempt local government from passing policies to prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products. Please reject this proposal. Preempting local municipalities from passing local laws specific to protecting kids in their community from the harms of tobacco use and nicotine addiction is a dangerous policy and bad for kids.

Just like the members that make up these chambers, every county, city, town, and village is different with unique needs. As many of you know coming from positions in local government and being members of specific communities, you know what's best for your community. What works for one city does not always work for another city. That is why local governments exist, to create laws that most accurately reflect the unique view, values, and needs of the people who live there. That is also why both of these chambers passed Tobacco 21 in Ohio in 2019 and allowed local municipalities the ability to create local laws as needed to further protect their community.

Flavored tobacco products were created and designed to attract kids. The State of Ohio recently announced a multi-million dollar settlement with JUUL, one of the first e-cigarette companies to lure in kids with sweet, candy flavored vapes like raspberry marshmallow, Mango, watermelon bubblegum, mixed berry, and cotton candy. Now the market is saturated with cheaper, disposable devices in more than 15,000 unique flavors.

The nicotine content in most of the devices that are being sold to kids equal 15 to 22 packs of cigarettes – some containing the same amount of nicotine as 30 packs of cigarettes. These products are often sold with 5% nicotine, but we're seeing that increase with product samples given out that are 6% nicotine. Nicotine is poison and especially dangerous for developing brains. Recent studies show that e-cigarettes can lead to lung damage and cardiovascular disease.

This proposal is designed to help Big Tobacco and play into special interests who profit from selling poison.

This amendment will hurt the future of Ohio, our kids.

Please reject any proposal to preempt municipalities from protecting their communities and allow Ohio cities and towns to retain the authority to enact and enforce sound public health policies to protect kids and all their residents. Thank you.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.