

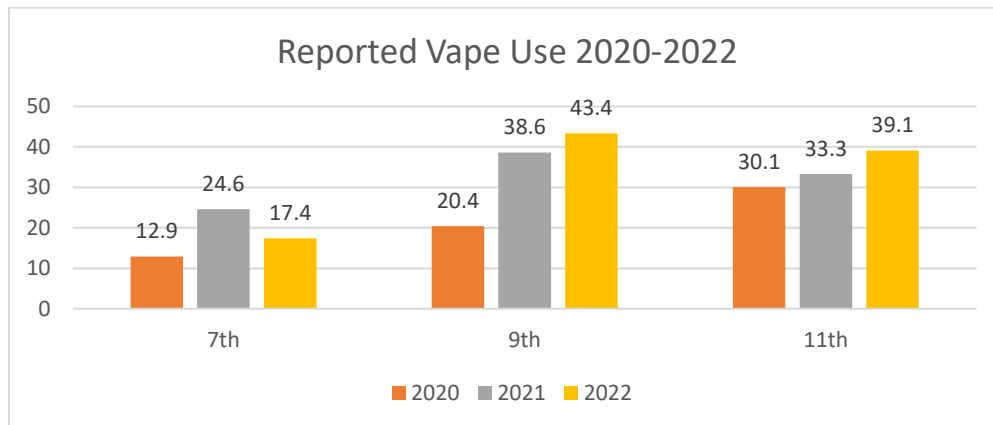


Nancy Beals- Coalition Coordinator
Union County Drug Free Coalition

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Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, I am pleased to discuss the importance of HB 258, which seeks to increase penalties for those who repeatedly sell tobacco products, including products used for vaping, to minors. I offer further support for the provisions of the bill that would allow the application of public nuisance laws to places where sales to minors repeatedly occur.

In Union County Teen use of tobacco products was on a steady decline, that is until electronic cigarettes hit the market. Reported use rates by our teens is displayed in the chart below. It is important to note that reported use rates of other substances of abuse are going down, nicotine is the only area where we see increasing use.



The Union County Drug Free Coalition strongly supports stricter regulations and penalties against the sale and distribution of vape products to minors.

We had a new smoke shop open two years ago and were frustrated to learn that it had four failed compliance checks. It was only after local law enforcement met with the owners that things changed. It is very helpful to have other ways to leverage and encourage community friendly sales tactics.

Once a business develops a reputation for selling to minors it can attract other unsavory elements and become a nuisance in a community.