

Dr. Daniel Addison
Ohio House Health Committee
American Heart Association Proponent Testimony
House Bill 96

Chair Jean Schmidt, Vice Chair Kellie Deeter, Ranking Minority Member Dr. Anita Somani, and members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the American Heart Association in support of House Bill 96, the state operating budget bill.

My name is Dr. Daniel Addison, and I am a practicing cardiologist, clinical researcher, and associate professor at Ohio State University specializing in cardiovascular imaging and cardio-oncology. In my work, I have seen the devastating effects of cardiovascular disease, which all too often is directly tied to tobacco use.

The reality is stark: smoking is the leading cause of preventable deathⁱ, and Ohio is suffering greatly because of it.

Every year, over 20,000 Ohioans die as a result of smokingⁱⁱ. That's the equivalent of wiping out the entire population of a city like Athens or Circleville every single year. But the impact goes beyond lives lost. The financial burden of smoking is staggering. According to the Health Policy Institute of Ohio, the total annual healthcare cost of cigarette smoking in our state is nearly \$7 billionⁱⁱⁱ. That's money spent treating preventable diseases – heart attacks, strokes, lung disease, and cancer – resources that could be used to improve the health of our communities instead of treating the damage caused by Big Tobacco.

And yet, while Ohioans pay the price, the tobacco industry continues to spend aggressively to hook new customers. Every year, tobacco companies pour more than \$400 million into marketing in Ohio alone, part of their nearly \$9 billion national spending strategy^{iv}. Their goal is clear: keep people addicted. And their most lucrative target? Young people.

Between 2016 and 2020, e-cigarette use among 18- to 24-year-olds in Ohio skyrocketed by 77%, with nearly 1 in 5 young adults using e-cigarettes^v – almost double the national average^{vi}. This is an epidemic, fueled by flavored nicotine products designed to hook young users before their brains have fully developed.

We cannot afford to sit back and let this continue. HB 96 includes crucial evidence-based policies that will curb tobacco use, protect Ohio's youth, and generate much-needed state revenue.

Key provisions include:

- Eliminating flavored e-cigarette products, which is a crucial step in preventing youth addiction and reducing overall tobacco use.
- Implementing a \$10 million annual appropriation for tobacco prevention and cessation efforts, which ensures Ohioans have the resources they need to quit and helps prevent the next generation from getting addicted.
- Starting a vapor retailer licensing program which strengthens enforcement against illegal sales to minors as well as putting an end to the sale of dangerous and unauthorized tobacco products which are often illegally imported from Asia.
- Increasing taxes on harmful tobacco products, including:
 - A \$1.50 per pack increase in the cigarette tax to discourage smoking.
 - An increase in the Other Tobacco Product, or OTP, tax to 42% of the wholesale price, to bring it in line with cigarette taxation.
 - And a doubling of the vapor tax from \$0.10/mL to \$0.20/mL, ensuring all nicotine products are appropriately taxed.

Raising tobacco taxes is a win-win-win solution. It saves lives, reduces health care costs, and generates revenue that can be reinvested in public health programs like the governor's proposal to fund a child tax credit for Ohio's neediest families.

Each of you has an opportunity right now to make a lasting impact on public health with HB 96. The tobacco-related provisions in this bill will prevent disease, save lives, and ensure a healthier future for all Ohioans.

I respectfully ask you to support these measures and stand up to the tobacco industry's relentless efforts to keep our communities addicted. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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https://www.google.com/search?q=athens+ohio+population&rlz=1C1GCEA_enUS1029US1031&oq=&gs_lcrp=EgZi aHJvbWUqBggCEEUYOzIGCAAQRrg5MgkiARAUgAoYgAQyBggCEEUYOzIPCAMQABgKGIMBGLEDGIAEMg8IBBAAGAo YgwEYsQMYYgAQyCQgFEAAyChiABDIJCAYQABgKGIAEMgkIBxAAGAoYgAQyBwgIEAAyG AQyCQgJEAAyChiABNIBCDI4 MTvqMG03qAIAA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

ii <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/ohio>

iii [https://www.healthpolicyohio.org/our-work/facts-figures/alcohol-tobacco-and-cannabis#:~:text=Health%20impacts%20of%20tobacco%20use%20in%20Ohio&text=HPIO%20analysis%20finds%20that%2C%20after,billion%20\(in%202020%20dollars\)](https://www.healthpolicyohio.org/our-work/facts-figures/alcohol-tobacco-and-cannabis#:~:text=Health%20impacts%20of%20tobacco%20use%20in%20Ohio&text=HPIO%20analysis%20finds%20that%2C%20after,billion%20(in%202020%20dollars))

iv <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/ohio>

v <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/ohio>

vi <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/mm7244a1.htm>