



March 22, 2024

House Commerce Finance and Policy Committee
RE: HF4251

Dear Chair Stephenson and Committee Members:

The Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota (ANSR) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing the human and economic costs of commercial tobacco, nicotine and other drug use in Minnesota. ANSR has supported strong public policies that protect Minnesotans from tobacco industry targeting and reduce commercial tobacco-related health disparities for over 50 years.

Our organization supports HF4251, which would prohibit the sale of all flavored cannabis that is burned, inhaled or vaporized.

ANSR has worked for decades on preventing nicotine addiction, and we have tried to keep the tobacco industry from using predatory tactics to lure young people into commercial tobacco use. Through that work we have learned a good deal about what people selling nicotine and similar products do to attract new customers. One of the most powerful tools in the industry's arsenal is flavors. Flavors hook kids, whether it is a strawberry-flavored banana vape, a cherry-flavored little cigar, or a mint-flavored Zyn nicotine pouch. The nicotine industry has gotten by with this ploy for years, and now we fear the cannabis industry will follow their playbook.

Now is the time for prevention. Prevent the industry from marketing chocolate-, mint- or berry-flavored cannabis because we know that will be attractive to youth. Prevent it now before it becomes a 'thing' we need to play catch up to deal with.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jeanne Weigum', written in a cursive style.

Jeanne Weigum, President



ADVOCATES FOR
BETTER HEALTH

March 25th, 2024

Representative Zack Stephenson
Room 10
State Office Building
St Paul, MN 55155

RE: HF4251

Dear Chair Stephenson and Committee Members:

My name is Etienne Djevi, and I am an Infectious Disease physician and President of Advocates for Better Health (ABH). ABH is an organization dedicated to creating a healthy, equitable and thriving state by engaging physicians, students and healthcare providers in community-driven public health initiatives. As a doctor who specializes in Internal Medicine and Infectious Disease, I am writing to encourage you to prevent the sale of flavored cannabis that is burned, inhaled or vaporized.

With the recent legalization of recreational cannabis, it's important Minnesota learns from our past and prevents the cannabis industry from mirroring the predatory tactics of the tobacco industry. Commercial tobacco prevention and treatment advocates have worked for years to implement polices that reduce the health inequities and economic impact caused by tobacco. There have been many public health lessons learned from this work, notably: menthol (mint) and other candy and fruit flavors make products more appealing to youth and mask the taste of tobacco, which makes it easier to start using and harder to quit. Tobacco companies are investing heavily in the cannabis industry, and it's imperative we intervene to prevent this industry from following Big Tobacco's playbook and producing products that are designed to appeal to our youngest Minnesotans. Preventing the sale of flavored cannabis that is burned, inhaled or vaporized will ensure the cannabis industry cannot duplicate the same harmful marketing practices of the commercial tobacco industry.

It is vital that we heed the important public health lessons already learned and do not let history repeat itself. On behalf of Advocates for Better Health, please ensure flavored cannabis that is burned, inhaled or vaporized cannot be sold.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Etienne Djevi', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

M. Etienne Djevi, MD
Board President