

Hello my Elected Representatives,

My name is Eric Hanson. I'm 52 years old, and have been a school teacher in Minnesota for the past 23 years. I hate to admit it, but I was also a cigarette smoker for 34 years. After years of trying every quit method available with no success, I was finally able to quit smoking cigarettes two years ago with e-liquid vaping. I use cheesecake flavor with 3 mg. nicotine. I have been previously diagnosed with asthma and chronic bronchitis. I have not had bronchitis in two years, and no longer use an asthma inhaler.

My e-liquid consists of four ingredients: glycerine, propylene glycol, flavoring, and nicotine. It is not tobacco, and I have been extremely baffled by the fact that our FDA has been given the authority to falsely call e-liquid vaping and all of its components (including batteries) a "tobacco product."

Furthermore, I am even more confused why my government would want to mandate that my smoking cessation product, which is not made of tobacco and has no flavor on it's own, should be flavored with ARTIFICIAL tobacco flavoring. This makes no sense.

Your House Bill, MN HF 904 will only accomplish the following:

1. Bankruptcy of hundreds of small businesses and unemployment of thousands more (during a global pandemic which has destroyed millions of small businesses).
2. Increase in unregulated Black Market products (which are easy to get, and don't require any safety standards like the flavored e-liquids we have in place now).
3. Lost revenue for the State of Minnesota (people will travel to WI, IA, & ND, or find black market).
4. Increased cigarette smoking by both teens and adults
5. Criminalization of good American citizens whose only crime is to stop, or help people stop smoking.

Cigarettes still kill 480K per year. If you do your research and weed out the propaganda, paid for speculation, and flat out lies, you will find that e-liquid has had ZERO confirmed cases of death, cancer, lung, or heart disease. We all know that EVALI, although used to try to eliminate the e-liquid industry) was caused by unrelated black market THC products containing vitamin E-acetate oil- an ingredient that has NEVER been used in e-liquid.

HF 904 will have no effect on youth experimentation. Over 85% of "youth" who experimented with e-liquid vaping used JUUL or other Big Tobacco convenience store products. They even called it "JUULing." The tank used products you are proposing to ban were used by very few teens. Your proposed bill will eliminate adult smoking cessation products and destroy businesses, while leaving JUULs safely on then shelf at every convenience store, and also give them the monopoly.

"Youth" usage rates have been ridiculously conflated to include unrelated THC use, and one time experimenters. The latest CDC information for regular youth vape users is actually under 7% now, and that still conflates the numbers with THC users. There has never been a "child epidemic," just youth experimenting as they always will and always have.

The CDC has also reported that “flavors” were NOT a significant factor in youth use. The main reason teens claimed was “curiosity” - and you can’t ban that.

Countries that don’t rely heavily on government cigarette money, such as England, have actual proven scientific studies showing that e-liquid vaping is 95% safer than smoking cigarettes. The damage, illness, and deaths of smoking are due to the inhalation of burning combustible carcinogens, which are not present in vaping. Sadly, our American government, both at the state and federal levels have chosen to ignore this actual science. But even if you do not believe these numbers, if e-liquid vaping were even 1% safer than cigarette smoking, our government should be embracing it, not working to eliminate it.

I understand that most of you at this committee are entering with a predetermined vote to ban these products, and everything I wrote will likely be ignored. I must ask you to represent our state using facts, science, and truth- not speculation, propaganda, lies, and money. Actual science does not contain statements like, “Studies SUGGEST that vaping MAY ...,” and that’s pretty much all you’ll find out there. No facts; no evidence.

If this is the continued route our government is going to follow, then we might as well have just kept Donald Trump in the White House, because the “evidence” our government is claiming against e-liquid vaping and youth use is quite parallel to seeing a bag of garbage on the side of the road, or a Fed Ex truck driving by, and claiming that it is irrefutable proof of voter fraud- same lying, different lies.

This is our LIVES, not a political party issue.

Please submit this testimony at the committee meeting. I would like to have been able to testify in person, but I will be teaching our children that day.

Sincerely,

Eric Hanson