



28 February, 2023

Chair Wiklund and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Midwest Vapor Coalition (MVC), a business trade group representing manufacturers and retail businesses in Minnesota, we urge you to **oppose SF2123** (Champion), which bans the sale of vapor products containing flavors.

According to the [2022 Minnesota Student Survey](#), conducted by the Minnesota Department of Education, youth vaping is on a steady decline:

*“... There **are substantial declines from 2019 when youth vaping peaked** in the Gopher State. Among 8th graders, between 2019 and 2022, past-month vaping decreased by 45.5%, among 9th graders by 56.3%, and among 11th graders by 46.2%.”*

[Youth Use of Tobacco And Vapor Products Has Significantly Declined In Minnesota](#)
via @IWF January 4, 2023

Among adults using vapor products, the most popular reason is an effort to reduce or quit using traditional tobacco products. According to the most recent MN adult tobacco survey, 80% of adult users prefer flavored vapor products. In fact, researchers published a report in ‘Health Affairs’, Sept. 2022 stating that:

“The nation’s overwhelming focus on e-cigarettes’ risks for adolescents may be harming the public’s health.”

This legislation would remove the primary and most popular alternative for adults that are fighting to break an addiction to deadly cigarettes. Many Minnesota cities have placed added restrictions on flavored products - *without banning them* - by allowing adults to have access to the products they have chosen to use to break their dangerous habit, via age-restricted vapor and tobacco shops.

With now more than a decade of history for this industry, sales data clearly shows that adult vapers want options, including a variety of flavors. Flavors are why vaping works for so many; it allows them access to products they enjoy and gives them a path to reducing their nicotine strength. Cigarettes continue to kill over 400,000 people annually. Why are we removing one of the few consumer-driven options that has proven to be less harmful than smoking?

Meanwhile, recent Minnesota Youth studies are showing that more and more students are trying - and using - other intoxicating products such as marijuana and alcohol; both of which come in flavored forms, yet no legislation is being moved that addresses this. In fact, just yesterday this committee moved to expand access to products that will likely come in all sorts of flavors, including products such as cookies and brownies. Respectfully, this is not a consistent message.

We urge you to take a consistent approach to all products intended for adult use - such as tobacco, liquor and marijuana - while creating reasonable restrictions to limit youth access. We also ask that you acknowledge that a harm reduction strategy used in many other areas of addiction - that is, allowing for consumers to use an approach that meets their needs and still provides a better but not perfect path - is an acceptable strategy. SF2123 is a drastic, one size fits all approach that will only result in more people turning to buying products online or from illicit markets, both of which can have dangerous results.

Please oppose SF2123 and allow adults to continue to have access to the products that they have chosen to best meet their needs.