

**To: Carlos Menchaca**

From: Jay Kolasinac

Date: January 20, 2020

**Re: Federal Mandate for E-cigarettes/Vaping Products**

**Statement of Issue:**

In the recent years, use of electronic cigarettes/vaping has increased a great amount, especially amongst the youth and young-adult populations. With the rise in teenage use of electronic nicotine devices, there has also been a rise in vaping-related emergencies. The developing brains amongst these young teens are particularly vulnerable to greater physical and behavioral effects associated with nicotine exposure compared to adults. Not only do e-cigarettes and vaping pose a serious threat to the health/safety of these teens and young adults, it also provides a gateway to the abuse of other drugs and substances. The growing use of these products amongst teenagers is a public health concern.

- **E-Cigarettes and Vaping products are not used exclusively by individuals who are trying to quite tobacco smoking.** Studies show that young adults and teenagers, who have never smoked before, are the ones who are mainly smoking these products. Some are even more inclined to smoke standard cigarettes after e-cigarette exposure.
- **The effects of nicotine, an addictive substance found amongst many others, in e-cigarettes is detrimental to developing brains.** Studies have shown that chronic nicotine exposure among the youth may induce epigenetic changes in the neural genome. The brain keeps developing until the age of 25, so the use of these nicotine products in early years of life can create lasting, multigenerational alterations in the epigenome.
- **The substances found in e-cigarettes are unknown.** Consumers truly do not know what they are putting in their body. Some products state there is 0% nicotine in the actual product where studies have shown that there is in fact nicotine in these so called “nicotine-free” e-cigarettes. Other products found in these products are: volatile organic compounds, ultrafine particles, cancer-causing chemicals, heavy metals (nickel, tin, and lead), and diacetyl (compound linked to lung disease).

**Policy Options:**

- The federal mandate would ban all vaping products not approved by the FDA. Several states have already banned fruity flavors for such e-cigarettes and vaping products. The outbreak of recent lung illnesses has caught the attention of the public and the rest of the US needs to do the same because still very little is known about the effects

of e-cigarettes/vaping because it is relatively new compared to standard tobacco products.

- **Advantages:** To keep the nicotine products out of the hands of teens and young adults, we must take them off the shelves so that there will be a decrease in the accessibility of these products. If there is limited to no access of such nicotine products, there will likely be a decline in the usage of e-cigarettes and the consequential effects will also decrease as a result.
- **Disadvantages:** Such measures are not guaranteed to prevent young teens and adolescents from acquiring these nicotine products. This will most likely result to young teens turning to the “black market” for counterfeit nicotine devices which may even be more harmful to those who use it. Also, there is some evidence to suggest these products help those who are trying to quit smoking, will they have to turn to counterfeit nicotine devices as well as a result to the ban?
- There needs to be more research and education regarding e-cigarettes and vaping products. As mentioned before, these products are relatively new so there needs to be an encouragement/movement to conduct further clinical and epidemiological research on the effects of e-cigarette smoking/vaping. In doing so, there will also be a goal of educating the public on health effects/potential diseased states from the use of these products.
  - **Advantages:** Further research and education will bring light to a not so clear and foggy understanding of e-cigarettes. The more research the more the public will understand the impact that these e-cigarettes/vaping products can have on an individual’s health status. Educating the public will increase the percentage of individual’s who will stop smoking these products.
  - **Disadvantages:** This type of research and educational promotion requires funding and time. There can only be a study on the effects of chronic nicotine exposure when there are individuals who are using these vaping products for extended periods of time. Does the US have time to wait and study ever since there were numerous outbreaks of lung diseased cases related to vaping? Does something need to be done now as opposed to later?
- The FDA needs to implement regulatory actions regarding the sale of these nicotine products, if they are not banned entirely in the first place. The FDA should also work with other regulatory agencies, industries, and media to promote a set of guidelines that govern the marketing advertisements towards the youth.
  - **Advantages:** With these new actions from the FDA, there will likely be a decrease in youth e-cigarette There needs to be a framework that will enable the FDA to reduce e-cigarette usage amongst the youth while still allowing the sale of these e-cigarettes for the adults who are trying to deal with their smoking cessation. Media and advertising play a huge role in today’s society and if the FDA can influence the media, then there can be a positive effect on

the health of the community with less and less teens inclined to purchase these products.

- **Disadvantages:** With the little research that has been done on the health effects of e-cigarettes, the FDA might need time to come up with these regulatory actions/guidelines. Also, how willing will these other companies be to not promote the sale of their products? It has to be in the best of interest in these other companies to not promote the sale of e-cigarettes to the youth. Money is a very powerful motivational tool that sometimes can triumph over public health issues.

### **Policy Recommendations:**

E-cigarettes have been increasingly popular now a days and there is evidence to suggest that these products help those who are attempting to quit smoking. The issue here is that the youth are now “vaping” meanwhile they have no reason to because many of them have never had issues with previous cigarette smoking. I believe there can be a balance where e-cigarettes can be sold to those who need it while kept out of the hands of those who should not be utilizing them. The FDA is a big key contributor to this potential balance. They can ensure the public health is in the best interest while also ensuring the products that are allowed to be sold to the public are living up to their potential. To this, the FDA needs to implement a combination of all three policy options mentioned above. No one policy change can solve all the issues that the US is experiencing with e-cigarettes.

### **Sources:**

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