



February 4, 2020

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

We are writing to express our strong support for H.R. 2339, the Reversing the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act of 2019. This legislation will address the current youth e-cigarette epidemic that is undermining the progress made in reducing youth tobacco use.

Use of e-cigarettes by youth has escalated rapidly in recent years, placing a new generation at risk of nicotine addiction and tobacco use. Between 2017 and 2019, e-cigarette use more than doubled among high school students (from 11.7% to 27.5%) and tripled among middle school students (from 3.3% to 10.5%). More than 5.3 million middle and high school students used e-cigarettes in 2019, an alarming increase of more than 3 million in two years. Use of other tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars and hookah, is also a serious problem. Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States and is responsible for approximately \$170 billion in health care costs each year.

The Reversing the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act provides a much-needed response to this serious public health problem. Its prohibition on flavored tobacco products, including flavored e-cigarettes, flavored

cigars, and menthol cigarettes, is needed to stop tobacco companies from targeting and addicting kids with enticing flavors, such as gummy bear and cotton candy. Flavors mask the harsh taste of tobacco and make it easier for kids to start to use a tobacco product and to become addicted.

The bill's prohibition on flavored e-cigarettes is all the more important because the Administration's recently released policy on flavored e-cigarettes will leave thousands of flavored e-liquids and devices on the market. Flavors are a key reason for widespread youth use of e-cigarettes. Ninety-seven percent of current youth e-cigarette users have used a flavored e-cigarette in the past month, and seven out of ten said they used e-cigarettes "because they come in flavors I like."

The bill's prohibition on menthol cigarettes, flavored cigars, and other flavored tobacco products will also help protect kids and public health. More than half of youth smokers – and seven in ten African American youth smokers – smoke menthol cigarettes. As a result of decades of pervasive tobacco industry marketing, 85 percent of African-American smokers smoke menthol cigarettes, and menthol is a likely contributor to the higher rates of tobacco-caused death and disease experienced by African Americans. A 2013 Food and Drug Administration (FDA) analysis concluded that menthol cigarettes increase youth initiation, increase nicotine addiction, and make it harder for smokers to quit. Cigars are also available in a wide variety of flavors that make them more attractive to kids. More than one million high school students smoke cigars.

In addition to its prohibition on flavored tobacco products, the Reversing the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act includes a number of other provisions that will help to reduce youth use of e-cigarettes and use of other tobacco products, including prohibiting online sales of most tobacco products, addressing inappropriate marketing and advertising, and ensuring that FDA will promptly implement the graphic health warnings on cigarette packs and advertising that are required under the 2009 Tobacco Control Act.

Youth use of e-cigarettes and other tobacco products is a problem that will not resolve itself. It will require action by Congress. The Reversing the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act provides the comprehensive response that is needed. We urge you to support this important legislation when it comes to the House floor.

Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association

Academy of General Dentistry

Action on Smoking & Health

African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council

American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology

American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology

American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Association for Cancer Research

American Association for Dental Research
American Association for Respiratory Care
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American College Health Association
American College of Cardiology
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
American Dental Association
American Federation of School Administrators
American Federation of Teachers
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
American Medical Association
American Public Health Association
American School Counselor Association
American School Health Association (ASHA)
American Society of Addiction Medicine
American Thoracic Society
Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights
Association of Educational Service Agencies
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of School Business Officials International
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Big Cities Health Coalition
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Children's Wisconsin
ClearWay Minnesota
Common Sense Media
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America's (CADCA)
Eta Sigma Gamma – National Health Education Honorary
First Focus Campaign for Children
International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer

March of Dimes
Mesothelioma Applied Research Foundation
NAACP
National African American Tobacco Prevention Network
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of Social Workers
National Black Nurses Association
National Center for Health Research
National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship
National Education Association
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Medical Association
National Network of Public Health Institutes
National Rural Education Advocacy Collaborative
National Rural Education Association
Oncology Nursing Society
Parents Against Vaping e-cigarettes (PAVe)
Prevent Cancer Foundation
Public Health Solutions
SHAPE America
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions
Society for Public Health Education
Students Against Destructive Decisions
The Society of State Leaders of Health and Physical Education
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons
Trinity Health
Trust for America's Health
U.S. PIRG