

Harold P. Wimmer
National President and
CEO

February 21, 2019

The Honorable Richard Durbin
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Durbin and Murkowski:

The American Lung Association is pleased to support the Stopping Appealing Flavors in E-Cigarettes for Kids Act or the SAFE Kids Act. While significant progress has been made in reducing youth tobacco use – these gains are being threatened by other tobacco products, especially e-cigarettes. Your bill will address the use of flavors, which have been attributed to playing a significant role in attracting youth in using e-cigarettes and cigars.

The American Lung Association is the oldest voluntary public health organization in the United States and is committed to eliminating tobacco use and tobacco-related disease. Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States, killing 480,000 Americans each year and another 16 million Americans live with a tobacco caused disease. Your bill will help prevent the loss of another generation to tobacco products.

Over the last year alone, high-school use of e-cigarettes has increased 78 percent, and middle school use has increased 48 percent. More than 3 million youth use e-cigarettes, making them the most popular form of tobacco among youth. As a result of these trends, both the Surgeon General and the Commissioner of Food and Drugs have called the recent surge in youth e-cigarettes use an ‘epidemic.’ In addition to e-cigarettes, the use of cigars by youth has also become a significant public health concern. These drastic increases in youth use can be attributed to appealing candy and fruit flavorings that accompany these devices.

Currently, a lack of meaningful action addressing e-cigarette and cigar flavorings by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has allowed for manufacturers to continue target youth with their products. The American Lung Association has called for all flavored products, including all e-cigarettes and cigars to be removed from the marketplace, and we believe your legislation will help ensure that our nation’s youth are protected from flavored tobacco products.

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The SAFE Kids Act will dramatically change the current e-cigarette marketplace and lower the rate of e-cigarette and cigar use. We applaud you for introducing this bill and your strong and continued commitment to reducing tobacco's terrible toll on our nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harold P. Wimmer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'H'.

Harold P. Wimmer
National President and CEO

