

**From:** Yeliz Er <yelizelaer@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 25, 2025 11:02 AM  
**To:** House Corporations Committee  
**Subject:** Testimony for Bill 5329

Dear Representative O'Brien,

My name is Ela Er and I am a student who resides in Barrington, Rhode Island, and a proud member of the Tobacco Free Rhode Island Youth Ambassador Program. I am very passionate about making my generation tobacco-free and making my peers aware of the negatives of tobacco usage to decrease the usage of tobacco among my peers. I am writing today to express my heavy opposition to House Bill No. 5329, as it directly affects the well-being of me and my peers.

As a young teenager who is growing up in a world where electronic cigarettes are getting normalized, I am deeply concerned about their increased usage of them. These products, electronic cigarettes, are marketed with misinformation that they are supposed to help you quit smoking and it's a safer alternative. However, it is as bad as smoking, if not even worse. They are addictive and linked to severe lung problems due to the substances inside them such as nicotine.

What infuriates me even more is that teens, who are about my age, have been seen as a target audience. They are seen as vulnerable and an easy trap. I do not

want any teens to be surrounded by any electronic cigarettes that are going to impact their health as well as their future in a negative way. I fear that the normalization of tobacco will become even more extensive and will be harder for future generations to escape, making me uneasy and anxious.

I am also aware that recently, about a month ago, a flavored vape ban is now in effect in Rhode Island. Although this doesn't ease all of my worries, it gives me some reassurance that our state is taking the necessary steps to protect its residents and teens - like me. E-cigarettes are very, VERY dangerous, and I'm happy Rhode Island was able to see this problem and take action. I do recognize that businesses will be impacted, but the well-being of individuals, especially young teens, should be prioritized to make the world a safer and healthier place to live. Changing this law, and allowing flavored air products back would change everyone's life for the worse and set us back in our efforts to stop the influence of electronic cigarettes.

I know some people that I happen to know who are impacted by electronic cigarettes and normal cigarettes, and one of them is diagnosed with cancer as well as lung problems, causing them to go to the emergency room multiple times. One of the biggest pieces of advice they gave me, which inspired me to become a youth ambassador was, "Do not come close to cigarettes or vapes, you are a bright kid with a bright future, you saw

what happened to me, and I won't want someone having to go through what I did." This story is a powerful message and reminder that there is a terrifying reality for anyone who happens to be smoking or vaping.

I also have asthma, and these types of products trigger my asthma. If I get close to someone who smokes or vapes, even if I am not next to them, I still get affected. I sometimes cough uncontrollably or have trouble breathing. I want to live in a healthier world that doesn't consist of these bad products, I don't want to be concerned every single day I go out, I don't want to worry about if something bad would happen to me. I want you to hear me out; I don't want to be exposed to these harmful products nor do most teens, they could hurt our well-being, and it is in your hands to determine the law.

I would sincerely appreciate it if you would not allow electronic cigarette products back into the market. My and my generations well-being should be prioritized. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Ela Er