

**Chris O'Brien**

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**From:** Christopher Lajoie <christopher.lajoie@outlook.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 4, 2024 11:41 AM  
**To:** House Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Opposition to an 80% Nicotine Vape Tax – Protecting Individual Freedom and Historical Principles

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Honorable Members of the Rhode Island State Legislature, House Finance Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed 80% tax rate on nicotine vaping products in Rhode Island. While I acknowledge the government's interest in public health, such a hefty tax poses a threat to the foundational principles of individual freedom and economic fairness that our great nation was built upon.

Firstly, it is crucial to consider the historical context of excessive taxation. The United States was founded on the principles of limited government and protection of individual rights. One of the pivotal events that led to the American Revolutionary War was the protest against excessive taxation imposed by the British, notably the tax on tea. Colonists took a stand against unjust taxation, leading to the rallying cry, "No taxation without representation."

Applying an 80% tax on nicotine vaping products mirrors historical circumstances that sparked our quest for independence. Just as colonists opposed oppressive taxes on tea, we must be wary of imposing disproportionately high taxes on products that are used by adults as a matter of personal choice. Such taxation undermines the principles of economic freedom that our nation holds dear.

Moreover, an 80% tax rate goes **beyond reasonable efforts** to regulate and control the vaping industry. Excessive taxation creates an economic burden on consumers, particularly those who have turned to vaping as a less harmful alternative to traditional tobacco. It risks pushing individuals back to more harmful smoking habits or into unregulated black markets, defeating the purpose of promoting public health.

Rhode Island has long been a haven for those seeking freedom from oppressive governance. Imposing an 80% tax on nicotine vaping products contradicts the very essence of our historical struggle for liberty and self-determination. We must not become the governing body that our forefathers fought to escape.

I urge the House Finance Committee to reconsider the proposed tax rate on nicotine vaping products. Let us strive for a balanced approach that protects public health without compromising the principles of individual freedom and economic fairness that define the United States.

Sincerely,

**Christopher Lane Lajoie, BSc** Warwick, RI christopher.lajoie@outlook.com | 508-431-5941

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