

Rhode Island Chapter

INCORPORATED IN RHODE ISLAND

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



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Testimony opposing House Bill 5770

House Finance Committee

April 10, 2025

Dear Chairperson Abney and Members of the Committee,

The Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics **opposes H-5770**, which calls for a 75% tax reduction for modified risk tobacco products.

Tobacco use continues to be the most common cause of preventable disease and death in the United States, and nearly all tobacco use begins during adolescence and young adulthood.¹ While some products may be marketed as “lower risk”, these products all contain nicotine, a highly addictive drug that can have damaging effects on adolescent brain development.

Electronic cigarettes contain not only nicotine, but other dangerous chemicals and toxins. Kid-friendly flavors like cotton candy, strawberry ice, and cool mint mask the taste of tobacco, making it easier for young people to start use. In Rhode Island, 16.5% of high school students report current use of e-cigarettes.² Of those students, 94% report using a flavored product.² Heated tobacco products use tobacco leaf which also contains nicotine, delivering nicotine at similar rates and concentrations to combustible cigarettes.³ Heated tobacco products also come in fruit, candy, and mint flavors which are appealing to teens.

By increasing the price of tobacco products through excise tax, you can effectively prevent initiation of tobacco use, promote cessation, and reduce the prevalence and intensity of tobacco use among adolescents and young adults.⁴ This strategy is particularly effective at discouraging initiation among youth. Excise taxes can also raise tax revenue and reduce health care-related costs associated with the tobacco related diseases.⁴

As a pediatrician, I hear from my patients about their struggles with e-cigarettes and other tobacco products almost every day- teens who are hooked on nicotine and are unable to quit. By allowing for a 75% tax reduction for some tobacco products, we will likely see youth tobacco use rates rise.

Preventing **all** tobacco product use among youth is critical to ending the tobacco epidemic and the downstream impacts on our health. **We urge you to oppose H-5770.**

Sincerely,

Allison Heinly, MD, FAAP

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¹ Center for Disease Control and Prevention. [Youth and Tobacco Use](#).

² Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Youth Behavior Risk Survey, 2023.

³ World Health Organization. [Heated tobacco products: summary of research and evidence of health impacts](#), 2023.

⁴ Center for Disease Control. [STATE System Excise Tax Fact Sheet](#).