

Rhode Island Chapter

INCORPORATED IN RHODE ISLAND

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



Officers

President

Scott Rivkees, MD, FAAP
scott_rivkees@brown.edu

Secretary

Shuba Kamath, MD, FAAP
shuba_kamath@brown.edu

Treasurer

Sara Ford, MD, FAAP
SFord@lifespan.org

Immediate Past President

Allison Brindle, MD, FAAP

Chapter Executive Director

Jennifer L. Mann, MPH
jmann.aapri@gmail.com

Board of Directors

Emily Allen, MD, FAAP
Ailis Clyne, MD, FAAP
Diane DerMarderosian, MD, FAAP
Susan Duffy, MD, FAAP
Patricia J. Flanagan, MD, FAAP
Gregory Fox, MD, FAAP
Natalie Golova, MD, FAAP
Allison, Heinly, MD, FAAP
Pamela High, MD, FAAP
William H. Hollinshead, MD, FAAP
Chandan Lakhiani, MD, FAAP
Elizabeth Lange, MD, FAAP
Kristin Lombardi, MD, FAAP
Karen Maule, MD, FAAP
Beth Toolan, MD, FAAP

Mailing Address:

American Academy of Pediatrics
Rhode Island Chapter
PO Box 20365
Cranston, RI 02920

Testimony opposing House Bill H8188
House Finance Committee
April 9, 2026

Dear Chairperson Abney and Members of the Committee,

The Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics **strongly opposes H8188**, which would provide a reduced tax rate for newly defined alternative nicotine products by capping the tax rate at \$2.00/container. The most used product which meets the new definition of alternative nicotine products would be nicotine pouches.

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 **These products all contain nicotine**, a highly addictive drug that can have damaging effects on adolescent brain development.

Nicotine pouches are incredibly appealing to youth, sold in fruit and mint flavors. According to the National Youth Tobacco Survey in 2024, nicotine pouches were the second most used tobacco product among youth.² And in young children, the rates of accidental ingestion of nicotine pouches rose 763% from 2020 to 2023- putting young children at risk for severe nicotine toxicity.³

It is well established that by increasing the price of tobacco products through 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.

This bill would instead lower taxes on certain tobacco products making them more accessible to youth. 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 H8188.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allison Heinly".

Allison Heinly, MD, FAAP
Board of Directors
Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

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

² Jamal, A. Tobacco product use among middle and high school students— National Youth Tobacco Survey, United States, 2024. MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 73.

³ Olivas, et al. Nicotine Ingestions Among Young Children: 2010–2023. *Pediatrics*. August 2025; 156 (2)

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