



April 9, 2026

The Honorable Marvin Abney
House Committee on Finance
Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

SUBJECT: Opposition to House Bill 8188

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the Committee:

The American Heart Association thanks the committee for the opportunity to submit testimony in **opposition** to H. 8188, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- CIGARETTE, OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS, AND ELECTRONIC NICOTINE-DELIVERY SYSTEM PRODUCTS. This misguided proposal would create a new definition of “alternative nicotine product” as any noncombustible product without tobacco leaf but with nicotine from another source and cut/cap the tax on alternative nicotine products at \$2.00 per container up to 20 units.

The American Heart Association is the nation’s oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. Heart disease is the No. 1 killer worldwide, and stroke ranks second globally. Even when those conditions don’t result in death, they cause disability and diminish quality of life. We want to see a world free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke. Our mission is to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives.

The American Heart Association opposes attempts to decrease existing tobacco taxes for specific products. **The tobacco industry is deliberately misusing and misconstruing the concept of “harm reduction” to downplay risk and normalize nicotine use—particularly among youth and young adults—while continuing to profit from addiction and tobacco-related disease. We do not want to allow industry to increase their profits while addicting the next generation.** Tobacco tax increases are one of the most evidence-based policy approaches to reducing uptake, especially in youth and young adults, and helping existing users quit.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Megan Tucker
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American Heart Association
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*Attachments: American Heart Association – 101 on Oral Nicotine Pouches
American Heart Association – The Truth About Nicotine and Cardiovascular Disease*