



Opposition Testimony – HB 2563
Shelby Rebeck, Director of Health Services
Shawnee Mission School District

February 11, 2020

Chairman Barker and members of the Committee,

While recognizing that HB 2563 takes some positive steps in addressing the vaping epidemic that we are seeing in our schools, I do not support the exemption for menthol flavored tobacco and e-cigarettes.

Students tell us that part of what makes vaping so appealing are the flavors such as Mango, Strawberry Twist, and Blueberry. Our youth say that in the absence of sweet candy-like flavors, they will use mint and menthol as their next best choice. Our youth state the menthol flavors taste like minty gum and make their breath smell good. Most importantly, our teens say that vaping would not be as appealing without any flavoring.

Our youth are telling us that when they are addicted to nicotine from vape products, they will also turn to cigarettes to satisfy their nicotine craving. Sadly, a generation of dual users is being developed. Again, without flavored tobacco, cigarettes would not be as appealing to our youth.

I believe to have the greatest health impact on our youth, HB 2563 should remove the exemption of menthol products from the legislation. If menthol flavors are allowed, we are merely shifting our youth's use of tobacco and vaping products instead of discouraging it. If menthol flavors are allowed, we will soon see a whole new array of menthol tobacco and vaping products - spearmint, peppermint, wintermint, etc. – targeting our kids.

For the health of our children, please consider restricting menthol with all other flavors in all tobacco and e-cigarette products.

Thank you,

Shelby Rebeck, RN