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CHRISTOPHER D. CROFT
8TH DISTRICT

House Committee on Federal and State Affairs
Kansas State Capitol
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66621

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Chairman Barker and Committee Members:

I am here to ask for your support on HB2563. In late December, President Trump signed a bill that raised the smoking age to 21. The bill provided the policy and now it is up to us to implement the law.

The CDC states that more than 34 million adults in the U.S. -- about 13.7% of the population -- are cigarette smokers. In 2018, 12.5% of middle school students reported tobacco use with 31% of high school students joining them. E-cigarette use has spiked among U.S. teenagers – a reported 27.5% of U.S. high school students used e-cigarettes in the past month. Nationwide concern about increasing nicotine use among young people and the possible health risks of electronic cigarette product is rising. Raising the age to purchase e-cigarettes and vaping cartridges, as well as traditional tobacco products like cigarettes and cigars, is intended to combat this epidemic.

There was a sudden increase of deaths related to vaping in 2019 and the targeted culprit was flavored vaping. The President went into action and announced an impending ban on all flavored vaping products. In November and December, it was announced that the problems were traced to illicit THC products adulterated with Vitamin E. Since that time, the administration remained silent on the flavor ban but has not taken it off the table. I believe a flavor ban is still a possibility and I am okay including the flavor ban.

Since January, I have spoken at several events and received more than 500 emails. Eight-seven percent of those that have engaged support the bill with a few modifications. Predominantly the issues are the flavor ban, needing an elimination of all disposable e-cigarette pods, and make e-cigarette products less accessible by only selling in stores that ensure adults are purchasing.

I still maintain support for HB2563. I would recommend, after the hearing, to reconsider the ban on the flavored products and to look at ways to restrict marketing and access to those under legal age.

Respectfully,

Chris Croft

