

My name is Samwell Powers. I am a tenth grade student in Wye River Upper School. I am going to be talking about the vaping epidemic and why I support House Bill 3. For starters, tobacco kills. Tobacco is the only industry that is legally allowed to sell a product that will kill half of all consumers when used as intended. On top of that, once you get addicted, it is incredibly difficult to quit. Flavored products, such as menthol cigarettes, only make it more difficult to quit.

Both of my parents use menthol cigarettes. This only proves that flavors make it far easier to get addicted. If adults can get addicted to flavors, then teenagers can as well. We've all seen what smoking has done to the generations above me. Do we really want the same consequences to happen to the younger generation? My generation?

Flavors in tobacco products are a large part of the overall issue. Flavored tobacco products now play a major role in introducing young people to other tobacco products. They not only taste better to first time users, but also make it much easier to get addicted.

Teenager's brains aren't fully developed, so becoming addicted to nicotine at a younger age is extremely detrimental to brain function and development. This means that consequences could become even worse than what we see now with adults with fully developed brains.

Across the country, more than 3.6 million high school and middle school students used e-cigarettes last year. This was an increase of 1.5 million from the year before. Public health authorities warn that these numbers likely have continued to rise. According to research, 97% of current youth E-cigarette users used a flavored product in the past month. 70% cite flavors as a key reason for use.

Even if a person doesn't smoke, they could still be affected by other smokers. Secondhand smoke can cause serious health problems, including heart disease, stroke, and lung cancer. Statistically speaking, one in four Americans who don't smoke are exposed to secondhand smoke. This includes 15 million children ages 3 to 11. Secondhand smoke can also cause sudden infant death syndrome, and ear and respiratory infections. For children that have asthma, their asthma attacks can become more frequent and even more serious.

Delegates and guests, thank you for allowing me the time to speak on an issue that I care deeply about.