



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE SERVICES

### ***TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE*** ***March 6, 2020***

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*Acting Commissioner*  
*Connecticut Department of Revenue Services*

Testimony in support of House Bill No. 5020, *An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations Regarding Public Health*

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Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg, Senator Somers, Representative Petit and members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill No. 5020, *An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations Regarding Public Health*.

The Connecticut Department of Revenue Services (DRS) strongly supports this proposal, in particular Sections 1-6 which would prohibit the sale of flavored vaping products, set more stringent nicotine content limits in electronic nicotine delivery systems, and establish penalties for underage sale of these products. I applaud Governor Lamont's continued leadership in this area.

DRS was proud to contribute to development, passage, and implementation of Tobacco 21 legislation, which was an excellent example of inter-agency collaboration. You'll recall Tobacco 21 raised the legal age for purchasing cigarettes, tobacco products, and vaping products to 21; and increased penalties for failure to secure or renew a cigarette dealer or cigarette distributor's license.

House Bill 5020 builds on these statutory provisions.

The DRS primary role in this arena is to administer tax laws relating to e-cigarette, vaping, and tobacco products. Tobacco 21 set forth a regulatory structure where DRS, in collaboration with our fellow agencies, deploys resources that prevent underage usage. Specifically, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) refers cases to DRS in situations where retailers sell e-cigarettes, vaping, and tobacco products to underage customers. DRS imposes civil penalties prescribed by statute, which can include revocation of the retailer's applicable license.

DRS, working again in partnership with our colleague agencies, is prepared to play a similar role in legislative passage and, eventually, implementation of applicable provisions of House Bill 5020. The proposal will enhance oversight, provide additional tools to restrict retail access to these harmful and potentially addictive products, and establish substantial consequences for retailers who fall short in their responsibilities by selling to underage customers.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions committee members may have.