



AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PUBLIC HEALTH.
Bill No. 5020

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I would like to thank you for providing me with the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill No.5020, AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PUBLIC HEALTH, on behalf of Hispanic Health Council.

According to the CDC more than 16 million Americans are currently living with a health problem due to smoking. Smoking leads to an array of diseases such as cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung disease, diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), it also increases the risk of other diseases such as tuberculosis¹. In United States (US) smoking is killing more than 480,000 people each year. Smoking during childhood and teenage years is especially harmful, since it damages the lungs, which increases children's risk of developing COPD in adulthood². In 2019, 31.8% of high school students were using a tobacco product, with 27.6% of them using e-cigarettes. It is estimated that if the current rate of smoking continues among youth, 5.8 million of them will die early due to a smoking related illness³. However, one marketing strategy that the Tobacco industry have used and that it has especially appealed to youth, it is flavoring tobacco products. For instance, the use of menthol products, which makes up 35% of the U.S. cigarette market, have been very popular among children, data shows that in 2018, menthol cigarettes were used by 54% of the children between 12 and 17 years old. This flavor is also very popular among current smokers older than 12 years, being the highest users African American with 85% of them using it, followed by 37% of Hispanics, compared with only 29% of Whites.

Eliminating the sale of electronic nicotine or vapor flavored tobacco products will prevent kids and youth from start using these products, get addicted to them, and premature death related to its use. It will especially help children from minority populations as well as their parents. Thus, the Hispanic Health Council supports Governor's Bill 5020, banning the cell of electronic and vapor flavored tobacco products. HHC mission " *is to improve the health and social well-being of Latinos and other underserved communities*", and as representative of the Hispanic Health Council, I encourage you to support it for the wellbeing of our children and our community, especially community of color.

Sincerely,
Sofia Segura-Pérez, M.S., R.D.

¹ CDC. Smoking and Tobacco Use. Health Effects.

https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/health_effects/index.htm

² CDC. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.

https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/health_effects/respiratory/index.htm

³ CDC. Youth and Tobacco Use.

https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/index.htm