

June 6, 2022

Representative Graham Filler
Chair, House Judiciary Committee

RE: House Bills 6108 & 6109

Dear Chairman Filler and Committee Members,

We are writing on behalf of the members of the Keep MI Kids Tobacco Free Alliance. Our coalition includes nearly 70 public health and community organizations ready to work with legislators to pass comprehensive legislation proven to protect our youth. Tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes, continue to have a significant toll on Michigan. Currently, 20.8 percent of Michigan youth use e-cigarettes, which is nearly double the national rate of 11.3 percent.

We are concerned that House Bills 6018 and 6019 are a missed opportunity to truly impact Michigan's youth tobacco epidemic. While we support bringing Michigan's tobacco sales age in line with federal law, this legislation only changes the age of sale without providing a structure to enforce it. Without proper enforcement, this legislation, while well-intended, does little to protect Michigan's young people.

However, the most alarming concern about this legislation is what it is tied to. For unknown reasons, these bills are tie-barred to tobacco legislation pending in the Senate that lower the tax rate on some tobacco products, making them even more affordable and accessible for our young people. The very last thing we should do right now is make it more affordable and easier to access tobacco products. We should focus our energy on passing stronger policies, not weaker ones that will hurt our kids.

There is absolutely no reason for these bills to be tie-barred together. In fact, tying these House Bills, which are a first step toward keeping our kids safer from tobacco products, to bills that make some tobacco products more affordable to our young people defies reason.

Our Alliance is asking the Committee to dissolve the tie-bars in House Bills 6108 and 6109 before they advance to the full House for consideration. Dissolving the tie-bars would demonstrate that this legislation truly has a positive intent for the health and safety of our youth.

Sincerely,

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Keep MI Kids Tobacco Free Alliance members

- Allegiance Health
- Alliance of Coalitions for Healthy Communities
- American Cancer Society - Cancer Action Network
- American Heart Association
- American Indian Veterans of Michigan
- American Lung Association
- Arbor Circle
- Ascension Michigan
- Beaumont Teen Health Center
- BreatheWell Newaygo County
- Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
- CARE of Southeastern Michigan
- Cherry Health
- Community Mental Health Association of Michigan
- Genesee Health Plan
- Genesee County Medical Society
- Genesee County Prevention Coalition
- Henry Ford Health System
- Hurley Medical Center
- Ingham County Medical Society
- March of Dimes
- Mercy Health
- McLaren Health Care
- Michigan's Children
- Michigan Academy of Family Physicians
- Michigan Association of Local Public Health
- Michigan Black Caucus Foundation
- Michigan Catholic Conference
- Michigan Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics
- Michigan Chapter of American College of Cardiology
- Michigan Council for Maternal and Child Health
- Michigan Council of Nurse Practitioners
- Michigan Health and Hospital Association
- Michigan League for Public Policy/Kids' Count
- Michigan Nurses Association
- Michigan Osteopathic Association
- Michigan Public Health Coalition
- Michigan Society of Hematology and Oncology
- Michigan State Medical Society
- Michigan State University – College of Human Medicine
- Michigan State University Extension
- Michigan Thoracic Society
- Newaygo County Great Start Collaborative
- Parents Against Vaping
- Prevention Network Michigan
- Preventing Tobacco Addiction Foundation
- Sacred Heart Center
- Saint Joseph Mercy Health System
- School-Community Health Alliance of Michigan
- South Eastern Michigan Indians
- Spectrum Health
- Tobacco Free Michigan
- Trinity Health
- Washtenaw County Medical Society