

Testimony in support of HB 1024
House Appropriations Committee Human Resources Division
Representative Chet Pollert, Chair
February 2, 2015

Chairman Pollert and members of the House Appropriations Committee: I am Hannah Rexine, a junior at Century High School, a board member for the Century SADD group (Students Against Destructive Decisions) and a board member of the North Dakota Tobacco Prevention and Control Advisory Committee, appointed by Governor Dalrymple.

I come before you today in support of HB1024. If we are to continue making progress towards reducing youth tobacco use rates, the comprehensive tobacco prevention program must remain fully funded so that we can continue to defeat the work of tobacco companies that continue to target youth.

Tobacco companies actively market to youth and it has never been more obvious now with the marketing of e-cigarettes. E-cigarettes are highly addictive tobacco products that are designed to hook us – North Dakota’s youth – to a lifetime addiction of a destructive habit – NICOTINE.

E-cigarettes have truly caused an epidemic. I have seen many of my peers who don’t use traditional cigarettes use e-cigarettes. I have seen them use the stealth vaping devices which don’t even look like a traditional cigarette. The 2014 edition of the national study called Monitoring the Future, shows that 8th and 10th graders are using e-cigarettes at twice the rate of regular cigarettes. That is an alarming statistic.

- 8.7 percent of 8th graders reported using an e-cigarette in the past 30 days, compared to 4 percent reporting use of a traditional cigarette.
- 16.2 percent of 10th graders reported using an e-cigarette, compared to 7.2 percent reporting use of a traditional cigarette.
- 17.1 percent of 12th graders reported e-cigarette use, compared to 13.6 percent reporting use of a traditional cigarette.

The leading authority on health, the Surgeon General, says tobacco companies recruit youth as replacement smokers to keep their companies profitable. I see this every day. As long as tobacco companies continue to market and develop new products, we will need to fight the battle against nicotine addiction and hooking new users – my generation and those younger than me -- to a lifetime of addiction. The tobacco strategy is obvious – target youth -- as nearly 90 percent of tobacco users begin by age 18 and hardly any one begins smoking after age 26. Thank you for your support of HB 1024.

Hannah Rexine
4660 Kost Drive
Bismarck, ND 58503