

Healthfsc & Breathe California Upholds Ordinance No. 2019-34

Support Letter – Ordinance No. 2019-34

July 24, 2021

Contra Costa Board of Supervisors

1025 Escobar Street, Martinez, CA 94553

**To whom it may concern: Contra Costa Board of Supervisors**

My name is Raymond Chimezie, PhD, an educator, public health scholar-practitioner, and youth behavioral health activist. I am writing to you in support of upholding Ordinance No. 2019-34. Prohibiting the sale of electronic smoking devices and e-liquids in unincorporated Contra Costa County is an important deterrent to youth vaping cannabis and tobacco use, which is a significant health concern among Contra Costa teens and youth. When less vaping products are sold in a community, young people have less access to these harmful substances because they are not able to purchase vape devices directly from stores and have reduced access to vaping products via handoffs from older family members and friends

A 2016 survey showed that **one in three** 11th graders in Contra Costa have used a vaping device for cannabis and/or tobacco. This is an alarmingly high percentage, as we know that youth who use cannabis at a young age are less likely to graduate from high school and more likely to struggle with substance abuse and addiction later in life. According to the US Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 5.6 million children alive today will die from smoking related illnesses if their access to tobacco products are not restricted. We do not want to lose our future generations to the greed of tobacco industries as they continue to promote and brand tobacco in ways that are tempting to children. Tobacco in whatever name is not good for children because it is addictive and harmful to young lungs and other important organs of the body. Tobacco use makes children vulnerable to other diseases. The Surgeon General has warned that smoke/tobacco costs our society too many lives, dollars and tears, so one wonders why there should be any hesitation to uphold Ordinance No. 2019-34, which will save the lives of our young children. Don't roll it back!

Additionally, I urge the Board of Supervisor to uphold this ordinance and equally recommend a comprehensive school health program to educate young children on the dangers of tobacco use and other youthful risky behaviors. Comprehensive school health education has a lasting impact on young children and their families as well as equips them with knowledge to identify risky behaviors and the ability to resist peer pressures to indulge in such behaviors. It should be a concern to any caring adult or political leader that children as young as 11-12 years are already initiated into tobacco use in Contra Costa County in which about 6,569 people die annually from tobacco related diseases. Therefore, end the death toll, tears, suffering, and huge costs from teen tobacco use by upholding Ordinance No. 2019-34, now. Don't roll it back!

When the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors put Ordinance No. 2019-34 into effect in December 2019, it demonstrated nationwide leadership to address the rapid increase in vaping among young people. To roll back the ban on sale of vaping devices would be a step backwards, and increase

the likelihood that young people are at risk of the harmful effects of vaping and increase the likelihood of Contra Costa youth becoming long-term cannabis/ tobacco users.

Our organization joins the Alcohol, Marijuana, and Prescription Drug Coalition (AMPD), West County Alcohol Policy Coalition (WCAPC), Monument Youth Drug & Alcohol Coalition (MYDAC) to protect youth in Contra Costa County in order to reduce health disparities, and promote a healthier community.

We hope you will join us and support us in keeping our ordinance! Together, we can make the city a safer, healthier place for our youth.

Sincerely,

Raymond Chimezie, PhD, CHES

US Fulbright Scholar

Youth Behavioral Risk Activist &

President Health for Schools & Communities Foundation ([www.healthfsc.org](http://www.healthfsc.org))

In Partnership with Breathe California ( <https://www.lungsrus.org/tobacco-control/>)