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Where a Dedicated Staff Means
KIDS COME FIRST

November 7, 2019

Supervisor, Peter Adam
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
County Administration Building
105 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Supervisor Adam:

As Superintendent of the Orcutt Union School District, I wholeheartedly support the proposed policy initiative to strengthen the existing local laws **that regulate the sale and distribution of tobacco products by making them less accessible to children.**

The Unincorporated County of Santa Barbara currently has 64 stores that sell tobacco, 6 of which are tobacco only stores. Of these retailers, 13 are within 1,000 feet of a school, which only increases youth exposure to tobacco marketing. In 2019, 49 of these stores were shopped in undercover operations, and 10% of these stores illegally sold tobacco to a minor. Youth who purchase tobacco products from local stores almost always choose flavored tobacco due to their sweet tastes and appealing names.

Adopting strong flavored tobacco restrictions is another way to protect our youth from tobacco industry targeting and lifelong addiction. Flavored tobacco products, such as flavored e-cigarette pods and small cigars, are a gateway to nicotine addiction. Four out of five kids who use tobacco started with a flavored product. As of 2017, researchers had identified more than 15,500 unique e-cigarette flavors available online. It is of the utmost importance that something be done to address this issue within our community. Manufacturers have introduced thousands of youth-friendly flavored tobacco products in recent years, including e-cigarettes with flavors such as gummy bear, cotton candy and peanut butter cup and small cigars with flavors such as watermelon, lemonade and cherry dynamite.

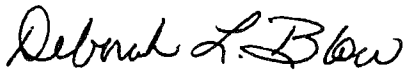
The tobacco and vape industry spends \$900,000 an hour on marketing and price discounts to lure new and existing users into addiction. Restricting pricing strategies and establishing requirements based on minimum pack and price is another way to prevent predatory pricing and discounting of tobacco products. This would eliminate discounting schemes that encourage consumption, and increase the number of units per package to raise the price of cheap tobacco products, making them less accessible.

It is of the utmost importance that something be done to address this issue within our community. The Orcutt Union School District endorses this proposal for the following reasons:

1. Flavors, including menthol, play a significant role in drawing youth and young adults to tobacco products.
2. Over 80% of adult tobacco users started before the age of 18.
3. Tobacco is a gateway drug and data clearly shows that its use among youth increases their likelihood to engage in other risky behaviors.
4. Over 80% of kids who use tobacco started with a flavored tobacco product.
5. Shows the Santa Barbara County community that our County believes firmly in preventing youth from beginning to smoke and vape.

We fully support the Santa Barbara County legislation restricting the sale of flavored tobacco, restricting pricing strategies and establishing requirements based on minimum pack and price. This is paramount to the health and safety of Santa Barbara County residents.

Sincerely,



Dr. Deborah Blow
Superintendent
Orcutt Union School District