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## Testimony Supporting H.B. 6464: An Act Imposing a Tax on Liquid Vaping Products

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Joint Committee on Finance, Revenue, and Bonding  
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Senator Fonfara, Representative Rojas, Senator Witkos, Representative Davis, and esteemed members of the Joint Committee on Finance, Revenue, and Bonding:

My name is Karen Siegel and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based child advocacy organization working to ensure that all Connecticut children have an equitable opportunity to achieve their full potential.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, and smokeless tobacco carries serious health risks including increased risks of cancer and heart disease.<sup>1</sup> According to a survey recently released by Connecticut's Department of Public Health, rates of vaping among youth doubled in two years and nearly 15 percent of high school students reported current use of electronic nicotine delivery systems. The young adult brain is particularly susceptible to addiction to nicotine and most tobacco use begins before the age of 21.<sup>2</sup> Taxation is a tobacco control measure that is well-supported by research. In fact, the World Health Organization cites that taxing tobacco products more than 75 percent of the retail price is among the most effective and least expensive tobacco control measures.<sup>3</sup>

We support this proposal and recommend taxation at WHO-recommended levels. ***We further recommend taxing all vaping equipment*** to encourage Connecticut residents--especially youth--to refrain from using tobacco products. Enacting public policy that promotes the health of Connecticut's youth is a powerful tool for ensuring that they have the opportunity to thrive and that Connecticut has a healthy future as a result.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in support of H.B. 6464. I can be reached with any questions at [ksiegel@ctvoices.org](mailto:ksiegel@ctvoices.org) or at 203-498-4240, ext. 120.

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Fast Facts." Available at:

[https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/smokeless/health\\_effects/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/smokeless/health_effects/index.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Winickoff, J., Hartman, L., Chen, M. et al. (2014). "Retail Impact of Raising Tobacco Sales Age to 21 Years." American Journal of Public Health. 104:11. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2014.302174

<sup>3</sup> MPower for the World Health Organization. "Raising taxes on tobacco." (2015) Available at: [file:///Q:/HEALTH/Health%20Research/Tobacco/9789240694606\\_eng.pdf](file:///Q:/HEALTH/Health%20Research/Tobacco/9789240694606_eng.pdf)