



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

Senator Carlucci Smokes-Out E-Cigarettes with High School Students and Youth Advocates

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On Great American Smokeout, Trend Should Be Less Smoking, Not More

Legislation Removes Distinction between Tobacco and Electronic Cigarettes

(November 21, 2013) Senator David Carlucci and Assemblywoman Sandy Galef joined forces today with students, community leaders and anti-tobacco advocates to call for greater

regulation of e-cigarettes. The Great American Smokeout is intended to serve as a marker for smokers to use to stop smoking on the day itself, today, and annually every third Thursday in November, or to make a pledge to stop. Instead, more than ever, teenagers are starting to smoke a relatively new product on the teen scene, electronic cigarettes. Galef and Carlucci want to highlight the lure of e-cigarettes and the need to be wary of them. Legislation Galef has introduced in the Assembly and Carlucci will carry in the State Senate will treat electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) the same as the smoking of tobacco cigarettes.

The bill legally categorizes e-cigarettes under the rubric of “smoking” along with the burning of a lighted cigarette, cigar, or pipe, and will allow New Yorkers to truly enjoy freedom from intrusions of personal air space, as well as increased safety from any hazards that might be associated with products which have not yet been fully researched or tested. It will also help to limit the proliferation of smoking e-cigarettes in public places and other designated non-smoking areas.

Electronic cigarette use is increasing rapidly among all age groups including younger teenagers. Experts note that electronic cigarettes are touted as safe alternatives to conventional tobacco, but have many questions regarding the safety of such devices. These questions are related to the effects of the nicotine inside the device, which is comparable to that in cigarettes, the chemical makeup of the vapors released, and even the safety of the device itself, which includes a battery that when charging generates heat much like a cell phone or computer.

The purpose of the bill is to remove any confusion regarding the use of electronic cigarettes in public, and prevent unforeseen negative health impacts on the public. An electronic cigarette is defined as a battery-operated device that contains cartridges filled with a combination of nicotine, flavor and chemicals that are turned into vapor which is inhaled by the user.

Senator David Carlucci said, "Electronic Cigarette companies, much like big tobacco in its heyday, are using their unregulated status in New York to market their products towards teens. It doesn't take a Madison Avenue executive to realize how creating an electronic cigarette flavor of 'tutti fruity' will attract a younger demographic. These products contain nicotine, produce a smoke-like vapor and may contain other potentially hazardous chemicals that are being inhaled into the body. This legislation is an important component in the fight against youth smoking."

Assemblywoman Galef said, "We are here today to say 'enough.' We have worked so hard, and the Senator and I particularly have worked together and individually, to reduce the use of cigarettes and the negative public health impact they have on users and non-users alike. Now we have a new threat on the rise with e-cigarettes. We have to nip this in the bud before it gets out of control and we are faced with another health epidemic. I remember how cool the Marlboro man was in my generation. The e-cigarette marketing looks very similar. Without knowing the effects electronic cigarettes may have on users or those directly in contact with users, we are exposing ourselves to potential new hazards, new expenses, and public health burdens that hurt all of us," stated Assemblywoman Galef. "Let's keep public threats out of the public eye and get e-cigarettes before they get us."

Students from the Ossining High School Youth to Youth Club and the Health Program, discussed how the Great American Smokeout was a day for them to distribute information to their peers to encourage healthy choices. They were upset to learn that they are targets of big tobacco companies, who know that developing youth is a vulnerable population. One student mentioned that hearing the flavors used for e-cigarettes made her think of candy and lollipops which could lure even younger children. All of the students said they wanted to stay away from drugs, tobacco and alcohol, including addictive substances such as nicotine.

This new legislation is meant to ensure the safe well being of all New Yorkers while more studies are being conducted on the contents of e-cigarettes as well as on the self-heating device within the re-chargeable cartridges. Similar to legislation enacted in other states, like Utah, it will allow business owners and residents to feel safe from electronic cigarette use within the confines of places of business all over New York State.

“What is so alarming is that virtually every child I speak with knows what e-cigarettes are. They are becoming so commonplace in our high schools and middle schools. Young people are falling victim to the same deceptive and predatory marketing practices as regular cigarettes. And, nicotine addiction is what may keep them hooked, or even cause them to switch to tobacco. It’s no wonder that three major tobacco companies sell e-cigarettes, because they profit when young people become addicted, regardless of whether it’s from tobacco or e-cigarettes,” said Diane Moore, Youth Specialist for Reality Check, Putnam

County Youth Bureau.

“Electronic cigarettes are one of the hottest trends in smoking. Signs can be seen all over town at gas stations and convenience stores proclaiming e-cigarettes as a safe alternative to smoking. E-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is known to be addictive. A recent national survey shows a dramatic increase in teen use of e-cigarettes and they come in flavors that appeal to teens such as chocolate and strawberry. The FDA (Food and Drug Administration) is very concerned about e-cigarettes as no one knows what the effect of inhaling vaporized nicotine has on the developing teen brain. Additionally, no one knows if they can lead to higher addiction rates. We thank Assemblywoman Galef and Senator Carlucci for taking action on this emerging e-cigarette trend by proposing to regulate e-cigarettes the same way as we do for cigarettes. Parents need to take note and be aware of this increasing trend of teen usage of e-cigarettes and beware of this new threat to our kids,” said Alice Joselow, Executive Director of Ossining Communities that Care.

“The potential for population harm from e-cigarettes is great. E-cigarettes may serve as a gateway for youth to become addicted to nicotine and graduate to regular cigarette use, introducing a new generation of smokers to tobacco related disease and premature death. New York has made great strides in reducing youth smoking rates. High school age youth smoking rates are down nearly 60% from 2000 to 2012. The introduction of e-cigarettes threatens the substantial gains made in reducing youth smoking in New York. Solid public policy and the continued funding of comprehensive tobacco control and prevention programs will keep youth smoking rates low,” said Maureen Kenney, Director, POW’R Against Tobacco, American Lung Association of the Northeast.

“Every year the 3rd Thursday in November marks the Great American Smokeout. This is another opportunity to focus on awareness and prevention of tobacco and nicotine products. While adolescent cigarette use has declined steadily over the last decade, the concern is the novelty of electronic cigarettes may stem the decline. E-cigarettes or hookah pens as they are sometimes referred to, are an electronic nicotine delivery system designed to mimic smoking a cigarette. They often come in flavors marketed to young people, have colorful packaging and look more like a pen than a traditional cigarette. E-cigarettes contain liquid nicotine and not tobacco and they are not regulated. The FDA has not studied the health impact and so the short and long term effects are unclear. In schools across Westchester County, Student Assistance Counselors are addressing the use of e-cigarettes with students. This week we are conducting awareness and educational activities around the use of nicotine and tobacco products in order to encourage youth to make healthy decisions,” said Rachel Lauture, the Student Assistance Counselor at Ossining High School.

“Nicotine is THE number one most addictive drug, said John Girolamo with the Greater Ossining Chamber of Commerce and the District Chairperson for BPOE Elks South District for Drug Awareness.

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