

## **Engel, Stewart, and Stevens Introduce Legislation to Ban E-Cigarette Use in Schools**

**Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Representatives Eliot L. Engel (NY-16), Chris Stewart (UT-02), and Haley Stevens (MI-11) introduced the bipartisan Smoke-Free Schools Act of 2019, H.R. 4019, which would ban e-cigarette use in educational and child care facilities.

Adolescent use of e-cigarettes has spiked in recent years. From 2017 to 2018, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported a 48% increase in e-cigarette use among middle schoolers and a 78% spike among high school students. Said another way, a staggering 3.6 million teenagers used e-cigarettes in 2018. These increases have led the Surgeon General and the Secretary of Department of Health and Human Services to label this a public health epidemic.

Like conventional cigarettes, the nicotine in e-cigarettes can be deleterious for children, including hampering brain development and damaging lungs. Furthermore, adolescent e-cigarette use increases the odds that children will become adult cigarette users.

Schools are at the frontline of addressing the adolescent e-cigarette epidemic. In the classroom, e-cigarette use has been shown to negatively affect concentration and learning. The Smoke-Free Schools Act will support school-based efforts by requiring that e-cigarettes and other electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) such as vape pens are included in smoking bans for educational and child care facilities that receive federal funding.

“We are in the midst of an adolescent tobacco epidemic,” **said Rep. Eliot Engel.** “Too many children are being exposed to e-cigarettes in schools, threatening the progress we have made in reducing tobacco use. This bill provides our teachers and school administrators with federal support to tackle this public health crisis and prevent another generation from becoming addicted to nicotine.”

“E-cigarettes have made their way into schools across the country and have quickly become an epidemic among youth. E-cigarettes need to be taken as serious as combustible cigarettes and this bill is a great start,” **said Rep. Chris Stewart.**

“I’m proud to join Congressman Engel and Congressman Stewart in introducing this important legislation. We need to protect our kids from all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and I am committed to giving Michigan’s schools and teachers the tools they need to respond to the youth e-cigarette epidemic,” **said Rep. Haley Stevens.**

Senators Tom Udall (D-NM) and Mitt Romney (R-UT) have introduced identical language in the Senate.

“The enormous progress we made in reducing youth tobacco use is now in serious jeopardy in New Mexico and across the country. While e-cigarette companies have promised to address the

alarming rates of youth vaping – they continue to use enticing flavors and deceptive marketing tactics to hook an entirely new generation of children on tobacco products in order to fatten their profits,” **said Senator Tom Udall**. “New Mexico parents and teachers know that our schools are on the front lines of this epidemic, and that is why I am working with Representatives Engel, Stewart, and Stevens, along with Senator Romney, to ban e-cigarette use in schools to protect the public health of our students and their families.”

“In my home state of Utah, the use of electronic cigarettes has nearly doubled in the last five years, with young Utahns most likely to be introduced to vaping while they are in school,” **Senator Mitt Romney said**. “By banning the use of electronic cigarettes in schools, we are taking an important step to protect the health of young people in Utah and across the nation. I’m pleased that our colleagues in the House of Representatives have introduced our *Smoke Free Schools Act* as we continue working together to pass this important legislation.”

“We share Representatives Engel’s, Stewart’s, and Stevens’s alarm about the youth e-cigarette epidemic and appreciate their commitment to help address the problem,” **said Matthew L. Myers, President of Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids**.

“The Smoke-Free Schools Act of 2019 allows school districts greater flexibility in addressing a key component of the Every Student Succeeds Act — to foster healthy, supportive, and drug-free schools that support academic achievement for our children,” **said Thomas J. Gentzel, Executive Director and CEO of National School Boards Association (NSBA)**. “The National School Boards Association appreciates the leadership of Congressman Engel, Congressman Stewart and Congresswoman Stevens in support of healthy and safe learning environments for our nation’s public school students.”

“Every child deserves to attend a school free from the dangers of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and other harmful electronic nicotine delivery systems,” **said Leslie Boggs, President of National Parent Teacher Association (PTA)**, the nation’s oldest and largest child advocacy association. “National PTA is pleased to support the Smoke-Free Schools Act of 2019 and applauds Representatives Eliot L. Engel, Chris Stewart, and Haley Stevens for introducing the bill to explicitly prohibit the use of e-cigarettes in schools.”

### **Summary of the Smoke-Free Schools Act of 2019 (H.R. 4019):**

#### **Prohibits e-cigarettes in schools:**

- The bill clarifies the Pro-Children Act of 2001 to state that e-cigarettes and other electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) should be included in smoking bans in educational and child care facilities.

**Establish Findings:**

- The bill establishes findings supporting the assertion that e-cigarette use has become a public health epidemic in schools and among youth. The findings discuss the substantial increases in youth smoking in the past few years, as well as the dangers of nicotine addiction for people under the age of 18.
- Highlights Congress's policy-setting role in ensuring youth tobacco is discouraged to the maximum extent possible.

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