

My name is Kevin Aldwaik. I am here today to voice my concerns on this proposed tobacco tax, a proposal without any considerations to current social & economic hardships facing both our residents & small businesses alike. And without considering some facts.

I own a small convenience store in Minneapolis. In recent years, my C-Store industry has become the battleground for excessive regulations and meaningless BANS, on legal products readily available for adult use everywhere else. Adding a new Tobacco tax will push me out of business. Meanwhile the same products are readily available online to anyone to purchase, without any regulations or restrictions in our state & with no taxes collected. I find the eagerness to introduce legislative Bills to add more taxes to a product that is already heavily taxed in our state inconceivable.

Minnesota is already one of the highest tobacco taxed states. Why impose more taxes on local retailers? When we have an online loophole. Why not introduce legislative bills to address that instead of penalizing adult smokers and small businesses that are already struggling?

We are all witnessing the devastating effects on small business in light of Covid-19 with closures and restrictions. Proposing more taxes at this moment is absurd, that would be a detriment to a small segment of Minnesota residents & small businesses.

I urge you to reconsider this legislation & vote against it.

Thank you

Kevin Aldwaik- MN Resident & a struggling small business owner

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