

Good morning, Chairman Carpenter, Vice Chairman Kessler and members of the House Federal and State Affairs Committee. I appreciate you allowing me to testify today remotely to accommodate my business schedule.

My name is Phil Near, and along with my wife Cheryl, we own twenty-six convenience stores called Jump Start, which are located throughout Wichita and the surrounding area. I requested introduction of House Bill 2801 through the Chairman and speak today in full support of this bill.

In our stores we sell cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and tobacco products and take very seriously our responsibility to sell legal products only to adults 21 and over. However, I'm concerned by recent market trends showing an influx of illegal, unregulated e-cigarette products being smuggled in from overseas. I'm particularly worried about the health risk to our youth as we see more of them using these types of products.

By setting up an e-cigarette directory, this bill would ensure that retailers and wholesalers are only selling e-cigarettes in Kansas that are complying with federal laws and regulations. This is the best way to know that the products we sell are legit and meet the quality standards we all want.

I understand that there are several other states that have already passed a bill like this and many more are currently considering it. I would like to see Kansas adopt this as well to protect the health of our youth and support a reasonably regulated, fair and competitive business environment.

I'd like to thank the Committee for introducing this bill on my behalf and for taking the time to hear my testimony today. I'd ask for your support of House Bill 2801.