



**Home of Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota & Circle of Parents National**

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November 30, 2015

Members of the Saint Paul City Council  
15 W Kellogg Blvd #310  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Council President Stark and Members of the Saint Paul City Council:

I am writing on behalf of Minnesota Communities Caring for Children. Our mission is to prevent child abuse and neglect by educating, supporting and empowering communities. Our organization would like to thank you for considering an ordinance that will take flavored tobacco products out of stores that youth frequent. This is an important step to ensure that Saint Paul youth live in a safe and healthy community.

Flavored products are designed and marketed to appeal to youth and are one of the tobacco industry's main tricks for hooking young people on their highly addictive and dangerous products. The packaging of these products is usually bright and colorful and often barely distinguishable from candy. In fact, many flavored tobacco products contain the same flavorings used to make Kool-Aid and candy. These sweet flavors mask the harshness of tobacco, which often dupes young people into thinking they are less harmful.

The tobacco industry's marketing to youth is paying off for them. According to the 2014 Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey (MYTS), an estimated 55,400 public school students in grades 6-12 used some form of tobacco product in the past 30 days. These numbers mean that the industry is successfully addicting a new generation of customers who will continue to spend their money on a product that will only lead to disease and death.

We need to do everything we can to assure that today's youth don't become lifelong tobacco users. By taking these products out of stores youth visit each day, you will help to counter the tobacco industry's efforts to start our kids down the road of lifelong addiction. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shelley Jacobson".

Shelley Jacobson  
Chief Executive Officer  
Minnesota Communities Caring for Children  
709 University Avenue West  
St. Paul, MN 55104