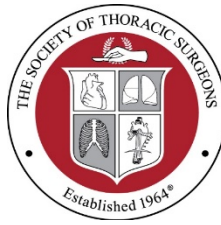


**STS Headquarters**

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(202) 787-1230  
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November 19, 2019

*Sent via email*

The Honorable Eliot Engel  
2426 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Haley Stevens  
502 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chris Stewart  
2242 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: H.R.4019, Smoke-Free School Act of 2019**

Dear Congressman Engel, Congresswoman Stevens, and Congressman Stewart,

On behalf of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS), I would like to thank you for introducing H.R.4019, the Smoke-Free Schools Act of 2019. This bill would ban e-cigarette use in educational and child care facilities that receive federal funding. This bill ensures that e-cigarettes and other electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) are included in existing bans on smoking in the aforementioned facilities.

Founded in 1964, The Society of Thoracic Surgeons is a not-for-profit organization representing more than 7,300 surgeons, researchers, and allied health care professionals worldwide who are dedicated to ensuring the best possible outcomes for surgeries of the heart, lungs, and esophagus, as well as other surgical procedures within the chest. The mission of the Society is to enhance the ability of cardiothoracic surgeons to provide the highest quality patient care through education, research, and advocacy.

We support efforts designed specifically to protect the nation's youth from tobacco use. Nearly 90 percent of adult smokers begin smoking at or before age 18.<sup>i</sup> Studies show that using these products at a young age has a direct association with tobacco use in adulthood.<sup>ii</sup> STS supports a ban of all non-tobacco-flavored e-cigarettes, including mint and menthol flavors.

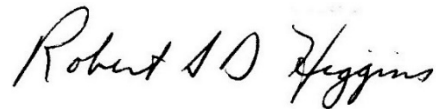
Tobacco companies have effectively targeted and addicted kids with enticing flavors, which is why youth use of e-cigarettes spiked in 2018, increasing by 78 percent among high school students and 48 percent among middle school students in just one year.<sup>iii</sup> This bill would ensure that e-cigarettes and other ENDS are included in existing bans on tobacco products in

educational and child care facilities, thereby helping to keep these products out of the hands of the youth.

Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, killing over 480,000 Americans annually and costing the government billions. We applaud your efforts to keep these harmful products away from children.

Thank you for your leadership to curb the youth vaping epidemic. Please contact Courtney Yohe Savage, STS Director of Government Relations, at [cyohe@sts.org](mailto:cyohe@sts.org) or 202-787-1230 should you need additional information or clarification. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert S.D. Higgins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "R" and "H".

Robert S.D. Higgins, MD  
President

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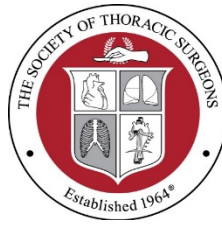
<sup>i</sup> <http://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR36361.v1>.

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.sts.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019%20Advocacy%20Priorities.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> [https://www.sts.org/sites/default/files/content/On%20the%20Record/Letter\\_of\\_Support\\_for\\_the\\_Reversing\\_the\\_Youth\\_Tobacco\\_Epidemic\\_Act\\_of\\_2019.pdf](https://www.sts.org/sites/default/files/content/On%20the%20Record/Letter_of_Support_for_the_Reversing_the_Youth_Tobacco_Epidemic_Act_of_2019.pdf)

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November 19, 2019

*Sent via email*

The Honorable Mitt Romney  
124 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall  
531 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**Re: S.1832, Smoke-Free School Act of 2019**

Dear Senator Romney and Senator Udall,

On behalf of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS), I would like to thank you for introducing S.1832, the Smoke-Free Schools Act of 2019. This bill would ban e-cigarette use in educational and child care facilities that receive federal funding. This bill ensures that e-cigarettes and other electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) are included in existing bans on smoking in the aforementioned facilities.

Founded in 1964, The Society of Thoracic Surgeons is a not-for-profit organization representing more than 7,300 surgeons, researchers, and allied health care professionals worldwide who are dedicated to ensuring the best possible outcomes for surgeries of the heart, lungs, and esophagus, as well as other surgical procedures within the chest. The mission of the Society is to enhance the ability of cardiothoracic surgeons to provide the highest quality patient care through education, research, and advocacy.

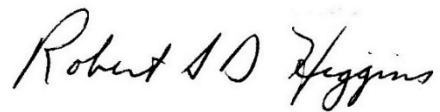
We support efforts designed specifically to protect the nation's youth from tobacco use. Nearly 90 percent of adult smokers begin smoking at or before age 18.<sup>i</sup> Studies show that using these products at a young age has a direct association with tobacco use in adulthood.<sup>ii</sup> STS supports a ban of all non-tobacco-flavored e-cigarettes, including mint and menthol flavors.

Tobacco companies have effectively targeted and addicted kids with enticing flavors, which is why youth use of e-cigarettes spiked in 2018, increasing by 78 percent among high school students and 48 percent among middle school students in just one year.<sup>iii</sup> This bill would ensure that e-cigarettes and other ENDS are included in existing bans on tobacco products in educational and child care facilities, thereby helping to keep these products out of the hands of the youth.

Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, killing over 480,000 Americans annually and costing the government billions. We applaud your efforts to keep these harmful products away from children.

Thank you for your leadership to curb the youth vaping epidemic. Please contact Courtney Yohe Savage, STS Director of Government Relations, at [cyohe@sts.org](mailto:cyohe@sts.org) or 202-787-1230 should you need additional information or clarification. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert S.D. Higgins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "R" and "H".

Robert S.D. Higgins, MD  
President

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<sup>i</sup> <http://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR36361.v1>.

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.sts.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019%20Advocacy%20Priorities.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> [https://www.sts.org/sites/default/files/content/On%20the%20Record/Letter\\_of\\_Support\\_for\\_the\\_Reversing\\_the\\_Youth\\_Tobacco\\_Epidemic\\_Act\\_of\\_2019.pdf](https://www.sts.org/sites/default/files/content/On%20the%20Record/Letter_of_Support_for_the_Reversing_the_Youth_Tobacco_Epidemic_Act_of_2019.pdf)