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CITY HALL NEWS POLITICS

# City Council approves ban on flavored vaping products favored by teens

Ald. Matt O'Shea's wanted to ban all flavored tobacco products, but he was opposed by owners of gas stations, convenience and tobacco stores. He instead settled for a watered-down ban on "flavored liquid nicotine products."

By Fran Spielman | Sept 9, 2020, 1:28pm CDT



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Flavored vaping products containing nicotine target teens, some critics say. | AFP/Getty Images

Chicago has been a trailblazer for decades in the fight to protect adults in general and young people in particular from the public health dangers of smoking and tobacco-related products.

On Wednesday, the City Council added another chapter to that legacy.

On a 46-to-4 vote after a surprisingly spirited debate, aldermen approved a watered-down ordinance banning the sale of flavored vaping products favored by teens, but exempting flavored tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes.

*Lea este artículo en español en [La Voz Chicago](#), un servicio presentado por AARP Chicago.*

Ald. Matt O'Shea (19<sup>th</sup>) originally championed a citywide ban on all flavored tobacco products, only to run into a buzz-saw of opposition from owners of gas stations, convenience and tobacco stores who accused O'Shea of kicking them when they're down.

He was forced to settle for the watered-down ban on "flavored liquid nicotine products."

Ald. Nick Sposato (38<sup>th</sup>) and Anthony Napolitano (41<sup>st</sup>) argued even that was too much.

“At a time when we’re looking at anywhere between a \$1.2 [billion] and \$1.5 billion deficit, we should be doing everything we can to keep as much revenue in the city of Chicago” as possible, Napolitano said.

“Myself being a border ward in a one-stop society where we do one-stop shop, I’m pushing everybody out to my surrounding eight suburbs that are right across the street.”

Sposato added: “We’re just killing business in this city. We’re making things tougher and tougher. ... It’s hurting business. It’s hurting the bottom line.”

North Side Ald. Harry Osterman (48<sup>th</sup>) countered that the health of Chicago’s youth should not be “compromised” to accommodate the city budget, even though it’s drowning in red ink.

An impassioned South Side Ald. Stephanie Coleman (16<sup>th</sup>) talked about the nine-year life-expectancy gap between Black and white Chicagoans and claimed two of those nine years were “directly associated with smoking and [tobacco] products” targeted to young people.

“I have a ward where, every corner, there is a liquor store, a corner store. And they are attracted to pineapple and flavors and cherries. There’s also a black market where people are actually losing their lives selling ... the ‘loosies,’ ” Coleman said.

“What’s fun and fruitful now is fatal to young people, especially young people of color.”

O’Shea acknowledged “both sides have given up things that were important to them” in the prelude to Wednesday’s vote.

Nevertheless, he called the ban on flavored vaping products a “major step forward” toward combatting a “the very serious public health crisis we have in our country.”

“We all know that vaping products are marketed to children with flavors like apple berry bubble-gum, cotton candy, gummy bear, fruit loops, strawberry shortcake. So please, don’t hide behind ‘vaping is a cessation [device].’ They’re targeting our children. And it will cost lives,” he said.

Lightfoot applauded O’Shea for his “willingness to listen and forge a compromise.”

Like her predecessor Rahm Emanuel, Lightfoot said the issue is “personal to me.”

“I’m hearing stories, even from my daughter’s school, of fifth-graders who are smoking and using vaping products in the bathrooms of elementary schools,” she said.

“My father was a two-pack-a-day smoker for my entire growing up years. He only stopped smoking because he couldn’t get enough oxygen to breathe. He was on oxygen for the last two years of his life. And I watched him die a slow, painful, miserable death.”

Emanuel pursued a sweeping anti-smoking agenda that drove the teen smoking rate down to 10.7 percent.

It included: raising the smoking age to 21; imposing the nation’s highest cigarette tax; banning e-cigarettes wherever smoking is prohibited; moving them behind the counter of retail stores; banning the sale of flavored tobacco products within 500 feet of schools; taxing e-cigarettes and prohibiting coupons and discounts that Big Tobacco uses to drive down the price of a pack of cigarettes to lure teens to take up the habit.

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By Sun-Times Wire | May 9, 2022, 2:45pm CDT

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By Kyle MacMillan - For the Sun-Times | May 9, 2022, 2:44pm CDT

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By Nader Issa and Mitchell Armentrout | May 9, 2022, 2:34pm CDT

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By Sophie Sherry | May 9, 2022, 2:34pm CDT

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By Sun-Times Wire | May 9, 2022, 2:33pm CDT

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