

Nilli Tayidi  
7357 Haverhill Lane  
Maineville, OH 45039

May 21, 2021

The Honorable Steve Wilson  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Senator Wilson:

My name is Nilli Tayidi, and I reside at 7357 Haverhill Lane in Maineville, Ohio. I am a junior at Little Miami High School. I am writing to you to urge you to propose a bill that would increase state funding to support tobacco prevention & cessation resources.

Smoking is a serious issue in Ohio, especially noticeable in comparison with the rest of the country. Ohioans smoke significantly more than most other Americans. 36.7% of all high schoolers in Ohio use tobacco, which is 1.5x greater than the national average of 23.6% (1,2). This is a frightening statistic; so many of Ohio's youth are being indoctrinated into a vicious cycle of tobacco use, which clearly continues into adulthood. In 2019, 20.8% of adults in Ohio were smokers, which is the 4th highest percentage of adult smokers in the country (3). This means that roughly  $\frac{1}{5}$  of all adults in Ohio are subject to the dangers of smoking, such as cancer, lung diseases, diabetes, among others. These symptoms can lead to death, as more than 20,200 smokers experience in Ohio each year (4). Death due to smoking is preventable, so this shouldn't be continuing to happen. Let's look at why it still does.

The state has made minimal effort to change these statistics. As of 2021, Ohio only spends 11% of what CDC recommends towards tobacco prevention and cessation resources (5). This sends the message that the state is ignoring the advice of health experts, which needs to change. Ohio's 2021 "State of Tobacco Control" report card was abysmal, the state receiving a "C" in the "Coverage and Access to Services to Quit Tobacco" and an "F" in the "Funding for State Tobacco Prevention Programs" (5). Ohio could be doing more to decrease tobacco use, but is instead letting thousands die. Allocating greater funds towards services for tobacco prevention and cessation would be a simple fix to this grave problem.

Resources such as Communities That Care and the Ohio Quit Line have been proven to be effective. Communities That Care is an organization that visits different communities and analyzes their strengths and weaknesses. Based on this analysis, CTC implements and strengthens prevention policies and programs in these communities, focusing on reducing teenage substance use and delinquent behavior. Studies have shown that CTC is effective, with kids receiving the intervention being 79% less likely to start using cigarettes and 134% less likely to use smokeless tobacco (6). Funding a program such as CTC could help make a significant impact on stopping the vicious cycle of tobacco use before it starts.

The Ohio Quit Line is a number that smokers can call that helps connect them with resources such as information about medicines that can help with quitting and a Quit Specialist, who can provide personalized support and advice to the smoker. The line is available to (but not restricted to) uninsured Ohioans and Medicaid recipients, two groups with a high risk of tobacco use. The Quit Line targets tobacco use where it is the highest, making it a valuable resource. The Quit Line has proven to be effective, as callers are 5x more likely to quit smoking successfully than those who don't (7). This and CTC are invaluable resources, but they aren't being fully utilized, due to a lack of funds. You can help change this by proposing a bill to put more money towards tobacco prevention and cessation resources.

I appreciate your help in working to reduce tobacco usage rates in Ohio. I know that you will do the right thing, and I look forward to seeing the tobacco use rates drop in this great state.

Thank you for considering my request,

Nilli Tayidi

## References

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4. Ohio Department of Health. *Tobacco Data and Statistics*. Innovate Ohio Platform; 2018. <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/tobacco-use-prevention-and-cessation/data/data#:~:text=A%3A%20Tobacco%20is%20the%20leading,per%20year%20in%20the%20state.>
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