

55 Fruit Street, Yawkey Center, Suite 7B
Boston, Massachusetts 02114
E-mail: rdmerkin@mgh.harvard.edu
Telephone: (617) 724-4000
Facsimile: (617) 726-0453

Ross D. Merkin, M.D.
Medical Oncologist
Instructor in Medicine, Harvard Medical School
Mass General Cancer Center
Center for Head and Neck Cancers

July 9th, 2025

Re: Massachusetts State Senate Bill S1568, An Act to create a nicotine free generation

Dear Massachusetts Joint Committee on Public Health,

As a medical oncologist at Massachusetts General Hospital specializing in the care of patients with advanced cancers of the mouth and throat, I am writing to express my strong and unequivocal support for Massachusetts State Senate Bill S1568, *An Act to Create a Nicotine-Free Generation*.

The majority of cancers I treat are caused directly by tobacco use. I have witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of these diseases—not only on the individuals diagnosed, but also on their families and communities. Whether my patients are ultimately cured or succumb to their illness, the toll is profound. Those who survive often face permanent, life-altering consequences: disfigurement, impaired speech, difficulty breathing, and the inability to eat—all of which severely diminish quality of life. And beyond cancer, tobacco is a known cause of many other life-threatening conditions, including heart attacks, strokes, peripheral vascular disease, and COPD/emphysema—diseases I also see all too often in my clinic.

Most tobacco addiction begins during adolescence. That's why early prevention is key. The Nicotine-Free Generation (NFG) policy outlined in Bill S1568 offers a powerful, forward-thinking solution: by limiting access to tobacco and nicotine products for individuals born after a certain date, we can dramatically reduce the number of young people who ever start using these harmful products. This bill represents a crucial step toward a healthier future and the prevention of countless, entirely avoidable deaths.

For the sake of our children and future generations, I urge you to support this landmark legislation. I strongly endorse Senate Bill S1568 and the Nicotine-Free Generation policy it proposes.

Sincerely,



Ross D. Merkin, M.D.