



Durbin Meets With FDA Commissioner Nominee Dr. Stephen Hahn

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) today met with Dr. Stephen Hahn, President Trump’s nominee to be Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), to discuss the youth vaping epidemic and the Trump Administration’s apparent [reversal](#) of a planned e-cigarette flavor ban. For years, e-cigarette use among children has skyrocketed nationwide, leading the Trump Administration to finally announce—on September 11, 2019—that it would soon ban all non-tobacco e-cigarette flavors “within weeks.” Now, more than two months later, no ban has been put in place.

“If President Trump caves to Big Vape’s lobby campaign and flip flops on his e-cigarette flavor ban, he will put millions of children at risk for a lifetime of nicotine addiction, illness, and death. I told Dr. Hahn that, if confirmed as FDA Commissioner, he will have a choice: protect our kids or surrender to political pressure from the tobacco and vaping industries.”

Durbin slammed President Donald Trump yesterday in a speech on the Senate floor for a seemingly [reversing](#) course on a planned e-cigarette flavor ban. Durbin called out the President for caving to lobbying pressure from Big Tobacco and Big Vape, breaking his promise to protect our nation’s children from a lifetime of nicotine addiction, illness, and death. Video of Durbin’s remarks on the Senate floor are available [here](#)

This week, Durbin sent a [letter](#) to President Trump slamming his Administration for breaking its promise on an e-cigarette flavor ban.

Five million children are now vaping, including more than one in four high school students and more than one in ten middle school students—an increase of 135 percent over the past two years of this presidency. Today, nearly 30 percent of school-aged children are vaping, compared with less than four percent of adults in the United States.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2,172 people have been sickened by vaping related illnesses, with 42 deaths reported—including four in Illinois. The illnesses have spread across 49 states, the District of Columbia, and the U. S. Virgin Islands.

In March, Durbin, along with Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), and U.S. Representatives Diana DeGette (D-CO-01) and Jamie Raskin (D-MD-08), reintroduced bipartisan, bicameral legislation to crack down on kid-friendly flavorings in highly-addictive e-cigarettes and cigars. The [*Stopping Appealing Flavors in E-Cigarettes for Kids \(SAFE Kids\) Act*](#) will place strong restrictions on e-cigarette flavorings and ban cigar flavorings altogether.

In September, Durbin, along with Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), [urged](#) FDA to immediately remove all pod- and cartridge-based e-cigarettes from the market, unless or until they can prove that they benefit the public health.