From:	Laura Folkwein
To:	Grp. City Council and City Web Site; Mayor Staff
Subject:	Please vote yes to restrict the sale of flavored tobacco products in Missoula
Date:	Monday, October 12, 2020 2:37:31 PM

Dear Mayor Engen and City Council Members,

I am writing to urge you to vote yes to restrict the sale of flavored tobacco products in Missoula at the City Council meeting on Monday October 19th.

The tobacco industry, including e-cigarette companies target young people especially through flavored products. We all know that tobacco use is unhealthy for developing brains and lungs, and second-hand smoke is also harmful. Why would we expose kids to these addictive and harmful substances when we have an opportunity to prevent or slow the process?

Some business leaders and tobacco industry lobbyists might tell you that limiting sales of these products will hurt our economy when local businesses, especially, face many challenges. However, I firmly believe that Missoula business leaders are smart and creative people who can come up with many other ways, besides selling flavored tobacco products to minors, protect and promote their business interests.

As a local faith leader in a Christian tradition, I look to Jesus as a guide and teacher. I grew up with those Sunday School room posters of Jesus with a group of children gathered around him and the quote from scripture, “Let the children come to me.” He told anyone who got in their way as they joined him to “move along” (not a direct quote, but you get the idea..). I think Jesus had that right. We don’t need to place obstacles in our young peoples’ paths to health and well-being. Jesus also spoke often against he exploitation of vulnerable people for profit, including children, orphans, widows, immigrants, people who were poor. As a Christian leader who cares for the wide array of young people in my congregation and in our community, I oppose the ways that tobacco sales, and flavored tobacco in this case, target and exploit kids. Children are our future, and our young people are also intelligent, energetic members of our PRESENT community.

Thank you so much for your service to the community we share. I know these are challenging times. I am glad we are in it together.

All the best,
Rev. Laura Folkwein, MSW
(she/her/hers)
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You can find me doing UCC work Sunday through Thursday.

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