



## House Committee on Finance Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 5770

TO: Rep. Marvin L. Abney, Chair,  
Rep. Scott A. Slater, First Vice Chair,  
Rep. Alex Marszalkowski, Second Vice Chair,  
& Members of the House Committee on Finance

FROM: American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN)

DATE: April 10, 2025

SUBJECT: Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 5770

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is the non-partisan, non-profit advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society. As an organization dedicated to advocating for public policies to end cancer as we know it for everyone, ACS CAN strongly opposes House Bill 5770, which would reduce the tax on all ‘modified risk tobacco products’ by 75 percent, thereby making deadly and addictive tobacco products cheaper in Rhode Island.

Reducing tobacco taxes makes them more appealing to price-sensitive consumers, including youth. In Rhode Island, 17.3% of our high school students are using tobacco products.<sup>1</sup> All tobacco products, including “modified risk tobacco products,” are unsafe and should be taxed and regulated in the same manner to encourage people who use tobacco products to quit and keep youth from ever starting.

Increasing tobacco taxes is one of the most effective ways to reduce tobacco use, especially among kids, and tobacco companies know it. Exempting certain tobacco products from taxation and, therefore, lowering the price of tobacco products is one major way for the tobacco industry to protect their bottom line, addict people with cheap products, and keep them addicted.

ACS CAN, along with our public health partners, have opposed the tobacco industry’s existing and proposed modified risk marketing orders. All tobacco products are unsafe, including those the FDA decides are permitted to use a modified risk claim. Tobacco products contain nicotine, which is highly addictive. The U.S. Surgeon General reports that smoking cessation is beneficial at any age and “only complete cessation of all tobacco products fully eliminates all tobacco-related health risks.” The modified risk tobacco product applications to date have been insufficient in proving that the products as used by consumers would lead to a reduction in risk. In addition, all the applications have lacked any information on the impact on youth – which is required under the law.

**Rhode Island must tax “modified risk tobacco products” at a rate parallel to the tax on cigarettes and all other tobacco products.**

ACS CAN urges you to protect kids, not Big Tobacco’s profits, and oppose efforts to reduce taxes on any tobacco product, including on “modified risk tobacco products.” For that reason, and for the health of generations of Rhode Islanders, we respectfully urge you to reject House Bill 5770.

**American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network**

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Please feel free to contact ACS CAN's Rhode Island Government Relations Director, Ryan T. Strik, at [ryan.strik@cancer.org](mailto:ryan.strik@cancer.org) or at (401) 259-1052 for any additional questions or information.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Strik". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Ryan T. Strik**

Rhode Island Government Relations Director

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

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<sup>i</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey.