

219TH NEW JERSEY LEGISLATURE
SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR
CITIZENS COMMITTEE
HON. JOSEPH VITALE — CHAIR

TESTIMONY

SAL RISALVATO

Executive Director

New Jersey Gasoline-Convenience Store-Automotive Association



S-2943

Oppose

January 14, 2021

Testimony of Sal Risalvato

Chairman Vitale, members of the Committee, my name is Sal Risalvato, Executive Director of the New Jersey Gasoline, Convenience Store, Automotive Association (NJGCA), here representing hundreds of independent small businesses in this state and it is on their behalf that we oppose this bill.

We oppose this bill not because we do not think that convenience stores should offer for sale nicotine replacement products, but because we must fundamentally oppose an unfunded government mandate telling all private businesses what products they must purchase and offer for sale.

One of the challenges in operating a convenience store is offering a wide variety of products in a very small physical space. Shelf space is at a premium especially in the smallest stores, owners make their choices of what to stock based on consumer demands and needs. State law should not mandate that no matter how small a business is it must offer a product even if there is not demand among customers to purchase that product from that specific location.

Late last year a large big box convenience store chain in NJ announced that they would begin offering these products at all of their locations. The fact that they are already doing it shows that there is no need for a government mandate. As a market leader and fierce competitor their action shows the industry is shifting in this direction anyway, and therefore a government mandate is unwarranted. Also, big box chains almost always have more square footage than the independent stores we represent, which are generally 2,500 square feet or less.

If there is sufficient demand among consumers for these products from convenience stores, then the market will provide them without any need for a government mandate. If there is not demand then these items will just sit on the shelf gathering dust, or else this law will just become an excuse to hit a small business owner with a fine a few years down the line.

I ask that you vote NO.

Thank you.