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Rt Hon Victoria Atkins
Secretary of State for Health and
Social Care
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Subject: Tobacco and vapes bill

Dear Victoria Atkins,

I am contacting you as a vaping consumer, and advocate for saving lives, vaping saved my life (happy to share medical records to prove that) and I aim to pass that on to as many as possible, I am not paid in any way by anyone to do so.

I was disturbed to hear some of the testimony given in parliament, much of the information was incorrect, or deliberately misleading. This is not good enough when debating a serious matter of health, accurate and science backed information is critical to saving lives.

I would like an answer to the following question: What was the reason to justify excluding stakeholders, the users of vaping products, other safer tobacco products, and even people who smoke?

User funded charities such as New Nicotine Alliance, who take no money from the tobacco or vaping industry should have been consulted. Users themselves or NNA would have been able to counter some of the poor information given and also to provide a view from those directly affected by the legislation being discussed.

Much of the information could have been corrected, quickly and easily. The main issues with the unopposed debate (no stakeholder representative, or consideration given to stakeholders, it seems); the conflation of illegal/criminal imports of untested and illegal drug products, and legal UK nicotine vaping; the lack of separation between the independent vaping industry and tobacco multinationals (they are not the same thing); the potential to harm the UK government stop to swap scheme (saving lives of people who smoke now, not a future population, years from now)... I could go on, but others like UK Vaping Industry Association have pointed out the issues, no need for a repeat.

My most important question; What is being done to ensure that stakeholders are heard, and the users of these products are not swept aside? Particularly what is being done to ensure false/misleading statements are not made to parliament by the experts, or that at least someone is included on behalf of users to set the record straight?

I look forward to your responses.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Pruen