

General Law Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5228 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING CIGARETTE DEALERS AND ELECTRONIC NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEM AND VAPOR PRODUCT DEALERS.

Title: DELIVERY SYSTEM AND VAPOR PRODUCT DEALERS.

Vote Date: 3/11/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/4/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL

General Law Committee/ Rep. Carpino

REASONS FOR BILL

Rep. Carpino brought this proposal to the committee's attention with the intent of limiting electronic nicotine delivery system (vape) dealer licenses. Some argue that there is an oversaturation of these establishments and that reducing license availability would help improve public health in Connecticut. The bill would place limitations on gross revenue from vaping products and would limit licenses to one per 2,500 residents of a municipality. The original raised bill also placed limitations on cigarette dealer licenses.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE

In response to concerns raised by specialty premium cigar retailers, the substitute language (LCO 2941) removes provisions related to cigarette dealer licenses.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY

Cafferelli, Bryan, Commissioner-Dept. Of Consumer Protection: Commissioner Cafferelli submitted written testimony requesting clarification as to whether the gross revenue and floor space are meant to be a licensing requirement or attestation, since the department would need further resources if the floor space restrictions were meant to be a licensing requirement. Commissioner Cafferelli also explained that extra application, the corresponding enforcement provisions, and the renewal requirements will need further resources that were not accounted for in the Governor's budget.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT

State Representative Tom O'Dea: Rep. Tom O'Dea provided written and spoken testimony in support of the bill. He explained how, regardless of efforts to keep the products away from

minors, including requiring state dealer registration and implementing age verification and shipping requirements, this issue remains a highly prevalent concern. He believes that this is due to the visibility and density of these products within retail locations, as research in tobacco control shows how these components are associated with greater youth initiation rates and decreased cessation rates among present users. He states that through imposing reasonable limits on vaping dealers and on the proliferation of high-volume tobacco, this bill will aid in decreasing environmental cues that normalize nicotine use for minors. Rep. O'Dea expresses his support of how this bill targets the high-volume problematic configurations, not causal incidental sales.

Anonymous 46: Supports this legislation.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION

Carden, Cody, Director of State Legislative—Cigar Rights of America: Mr. Carden stated that the thresholds of 50% gross revenue and 25% retail floor area for these products are functionally incompatible with the cigar industry business model, as dedicating 75% of their floor space to non-tobacco goods would eliminate cigar-centric retail operations in Connecticut. Mr. Carden highlights how there is no statistically insignificant impact on public health compared to mass-market tobacco products. Mr. Carden states that broad tobacco regulatory proposals do not properly distinguish handmade cigars from other nicotine products. He also states that the density cap and floor space restrictions in this bill would undermine cigar lounges' support of jobs, commercial tenancy, and state tax revenue. He therefore believes that this bill should include an exemption for premium cigar retailers and premium handmade cigars.

Loope Glynn, Director of State Advocacy, Premium Cigar Association: Mr. Loope believes that this bill is aimed at cigarettes and vapes yet targets specialty products like pipe tobacco and handmade cigars, which would displace these businesses. He states how there are no statistically significant addiction, mortality, inhalation, or youth access concerns regarding these products. He therefore believes that this bill should have an exemption for specialty tobacconists who sell handmade cigars and should not impose the 25% floor space mandate and the 50% gross revenue limitation, as they are unworkable for these small businesses.

Pearce, Scott, President, Cigar Association of America: Mr. Pearce stated that the bill's current draft will eliminate traditional cigar and pipe tobacconists. He believes that specialty retail stores are the best location for safe tobacco, as consumers will still get these products from delivery services via other states. For Connecticut retail stores to compete, he explained that they must invest in HVAC systems to maintain the correct storage temperature, adding to the maintenance cost. He also states how enthusiasts value exploring a variety of tobacco blends, which is why he believes retail stores should dedicate 100% of their floor space for these products.

Gallagher, Donna: Ms. Gallagher's opposition was largely unrelated to the contents of the bill.

Reported by: Emma Green

Date: March 17, 2026