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QuickPoint! – Washington County Tells Small Business Owners They Just Don't Care

By Eric Fruits, Ph.D.

Next week, the Washington County Commission is expected to vote to ban the sale of all flavored tobacco and vaping products.

Because only one in seven Oregonians use tobacco, some may cheer this decision. Others may not care at all because it won't affect them.

But it will affect the community. Without the sale of flavored nicotine products, most Washington County vape shops will shut down. Their employees will be out of work, and their storefronts will sit empty.

Then there are local convenience stores. Many cannot stay in business if they can't sell nicotine products. Not only will their employees be out of work and their stores sit empty, but your quick stop to pick up milk on the way home will turn into a lengthy detour to the closest grocery superstore.

At a public hearing about the proposed ban, I listened to the testimony from the convenience store owners. Many were Korean, Afghan, Pakistani. They came to America to make their lives better for them and their families.

But Washington County doesn't care about small businesses. As far as the commissioners are concerned, they can leave and make a living somewhere else. That's the message the county is sending to struggling business owners and their employees.

Maybe you don't care. But where will you be when Washington County decides your job or business is next?

Eric Fruits, Ph.D. is Vice President of Research at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.