



NATHAN JOHNSON
STATE SENATOR • DISTRICT 16

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**SEN. NATHAN JOHNSON & REP. STEVE ALLISON
FILE BILL TO COMBAT E-CIGARETTE USE AMONG YOUTH**

AUSTIN – Senator Nathan Johnson (D-Dallas) and Representative Steve Allison (R-San Antonio) are leading a bipartisan alliance to combat e-cigarette use among Texas youth. Last year, one in five Texas high school students and one in twenty middle school students reported e-cigarette use — exposing over 3.5 million Texas youth to the harmful effects of nicotine addiction along with a multitude of known and unknown ill health effects of vaping.

Although last session Texas raised the legal purchase age to 21 for all smoking products, e-cigarettes remain exempt from many laws that govern sales of traditional tobacco products: retailers are not required to hold sales permits, products are untaxed, and enforcement is grossly insufficient. Surveys indicate youth are still able to easily obtain e-cigarettes from brick-and-mortar retailers.

Senator Johnson's SB 248 and Representative Allison's HB 1255 will make several overdue reforms to reduce youth access to e-cigarettes. These include requiring e-cigarette retailers to obtain a permit, collecting sales tax on e-cigarettes, funding for anti-smoking campaigns, and imposing financial penalties and business sanctions on retailers who repeatedly sell e-cigarettes and tobacco to minors.

"Let's give kids a few more years to figure their lives out before we send them down the road to nicotine addiction," said Senator Nathan Johnson.

"E-cigarettes are falling into the hands of minors too often," Representative Steve Allison said. "Our work on this bill reflects a consensus among experts and among most Texans that teenagers should not be using these products."

"For too long Texas has allowed e-cigarettes to operate in a loophole and we're paying the price with substantial youth use compared to traditional cigarettes," said Charlie Gagen of the American Lung Association. "We're already facing what the Surgeon General refers to as a 'youth vaping epidemic' and Texas must act now. We commend Sen. Johnson and Rep. Allison for putting young Texans first by tackling this critical issue and look forward to continuing the work of reducing the toll of tobacco in Texas."

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Senator Nathan Johnson was elected in 2018 to represent Texas Senate District 16. Johnson is the Vice-Chair of the Administration Committee, a member of the Business & Commerce Committee, Jurisprudence Committee, Senate Special Committee on Redistricting, and Water, Agriculture, & Rural Affairs.