

**Opening Statement
Chairman Raja Krishnamoorthi**

Hearing on “Examining JUUL’s Role in the Youth Nicotine Epidemic: Part 2”

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Big Tobacco preyed upon generations of America’s youth. Eventually, we stood up as a country and said “enough.” State Attorneys General reached a Master Settlement Agreement more than 20 years ago with the 5 largest cigarette manufacturers forcing them to stop marketing to kids. The U.S. Department of Justice then brought RICO charges against Big Tobacco that demonstrated their engagement in a decades-long conspiracy to hide the dangers of smoking, manipulate the nicotine delivery of cigarettes, deceptively market products as safer, and target kids.

While we made tremendous progress in preventing youth nicotine addiction at the start of the millennia, we face a much different challenge today.

In 2018, more than 20% of high school and 5% of middle school students were using e-cigarettes. In fact, 3.6 million high school and middle students used e-cigarettes in 2018, an increase of 1.5 million in one year. As a parent of a rising high schooler and a rising middle schooler, these statistics rattle me.

In 2018, the leading manufacturer of e-cigarettes, a company by the name of JUUL, saw its share of the e-cigarette marketplace grow from 24% to 76%. And that company’s growth also saw a spike in youth e-cigarette use rise of [78%].

The surge of e-cigarette use caught nearly everyone off guard. It was quickly labeled an epidemic by the Surgeon General, the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

So how did we get here?

First, from the documents my office has received thus far in our investigation, I’m extremely concerned about JUUL’s marketing tactics in targeting youth. Today we’ll learn how JUULs effectively used social media influencers to build a youth-oriented brand, making “vaping” a cultural phenomenon.

I’m also concerned about the negative health consequences of youth nicotine addiction. The ability for kids to get addicted to e-cigarettes, and the inability for adults to prevent it, poses an unparalleled and unprecedented challenge. Cigarettes were easy to detect – they produce

smoke and the smell lingers on clothes. E-cigarettes, on the other hand, are a small, easily concealable product that produces only a small amount of aerosol that quickly dissipates. Unlike cigarettes that have a harsh taste, JUUL sells many flavors that appeal to youth, including mango, fruit, and mint.

In addition, JUUL's contain triple the nicotine content compared to previous e-cigarettes. Yet two-thirds of Americans between the ages of 15 and 24 do not know that e-cigarettes contain nicotine. Instead, they think it only contains flavors.

Yesterday, our subcommittee heard from two brave high school students. JUUL went into their school and gave a presentation that was supposed to be about anti-vaping. After teachers left the room, and outside the presence of any parents, JUUL gave a presentation that painted JUUL as healthy, and left kids believing that they could use it without health risks.

When the Big Tobacco companies settled with state Attorneys General, they were required to release mountains of proprietary documents detailing their plans. Today, we will examine whether or not JUUL used these documents as a model to their marketing campaigns.

Here is a quote from one of our witnesses today - JUUL Founder James Monsees: "After the Master Settlement Agreement, the big settlement where everyone was suing the tobacco companies, one of the results was that a lot of tobacco industry documentation was mandated to become public. It became a very intriguing space for us to investigate because we had so much information that you wouldn't normally be able to get in most industries. And we were able to catch up, right, to a huge, huge industry in no time. And then we started building prototypes."

Before I conclude I want to make one thing clear. The most important task ahead of us today is to help prevent youth e-cigarette use and nicotine addiction. But to effectively do so, we must trace the origins that led to this epidemic, expose the health risks associated with vaping, and hold accountable anyone and everyone who knowingly put children in harm's way.
