



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 18, 2017

Study: Local Vaping Bans Will Prevent Cigarette Smokers From Quitting

According to a new public health report, bans against vaping are making it harder for Americans to quit smoking. Many health experts have noted that electronic cigarettes are an effective tool in helping smokers to quit, but that has not stopped the federal government and many local governments from targeting e-cigarettes and other vaping products.



The R Street Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based free market think tank, published a [report](#) Monday concluding that vaping has become a powerful tool in helping Americans to quit smoking, and policies against vaping will ultimately prevent more smokers from quitting cigarettes. The report noted that vaping is a safer alternative to regular cigarettes and that policies combating combustible cigarettes are conflating nicotine-based devices with tobacco products. But vaping delivers nicotine to the user without the harmful tobacco, decreasing health risks and eliminating second-hand risks.

Federal data shows that 34 percent of vapers in 2016 were former smokers. Further evidence of the effectiveness of vaping in helping smokers to quit was found in a July 26 University of California [study](#) that showed that Americans are quitting cigarettes at significantly faster rates with the help of e-cigarettes.

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But local governments continue to pass [bans](#) on e-cigarettes and other vaping products by including these items in their definition of tobacco products. Many of these localities are relying on bad science or the narrative pushed by agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration that vaping is just as harmful as cigarette smoking.

For example, a 2015 study from a lab research team at the Veterans Affairs San Diego Healthcare System was heavily criticized as government propaganda after researchers claimed that e-cigarettes are as dangerous as regular ones and are just as likely to cause cancer. Careful examination of the study's press release revealed an entirely different conclusion. Dr. Jessica Wang-Rodriguez, one of the lead researchers, admitted that the cells in the lab "are not completely comparable to cells within a living person" and that the research team did not "seek to mimic the actual dose of vapor that an e-



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cigarette user would get.” Instead, the study created a scenario in which the e-cigarette user was “smoking continuously for hours on end, so it’s a higher amount than would normally be delivered.”

In fact, Dr. Michael Siegel, a professor in the Department of Community Health Sciences at Boston University School of Public Health, told the *Daily Caller* that the study actually confirms previous findings that the smoke from e-cigarettes is significantly less harmful than tobacco smoke and that the researchers’ conclusions were completely unfounded. He added, “It cannot be concluded from this cell culture that e-cigarette vapor actually has toxic or carcinogenic effects in humans who use these products.”

Critics immediately lashed out against the Veterans Affairs San Diego Healthcare System study and its questionable science. In an interview with the Daily Caller News Foundation at the time, Gregory Conley, president of the American Vaping Association, labeled the study’s findings “shameless” and “transparent” and questioned the agenda behind the research. He declared:

Government-funded researchers have realized that when it comes to vapor products, there is no benefit to honestly presenting their data. Instead, the path to larger government grants appears to be a competition where the best rewards are given to those whose studies generate the most salacious headlines.

The press release for this study was distributed just days before millions of American smokers make New Year’s quit attempts. This is shameless and transparent behavior aimed at discouraging smokers from quitting.

Federal agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control have targeted e-cigarettes with misleading campaigns in an effort to expand the FDA’s regulation of tobacco to include e-cigarettes, despite [evidence](#) that e-cigarettes are a less harmful alternative to regular cigarettes.

Critics contend that the government’s opposition to vaping is an attempt to keep competing products off the market so that Big Pharma can continue to peddle its significantly less effective anti-smoking products.

The *New York Times* has reported that major pharmaceutical companies such as GlaxoSmithKline, which sells Nicorette gum, and Johnson & Johnson, which manufactures nicotine patches, have helped lead a “strong opposition” against e-cigarettes. Such rampant collusion has given these companies an advantage. After all, the FDA’s Center for Tobacco Products, which headed the regulation of e-cigarettes, is led by former lobbyist Mitch Zeller, whose consulting clients included GlaxoSmithKline.

These companies clearly have a lot to lose in a competition against vaping products. According to the *Tobacco Control Journal*, GlaxoSmithKline and Johnson & Johnson’s nicotine replacement therapies, which have been approved by the FDA, have no better success rates than quitting smoking cold turkey.

California Polytechnic State University professor of economics Michael Marlow asserts, “E-cigarettes have become the greatest source of ‘creative destruction’ that we’ve seen against the tobacco industry.”

For this reason, it’s easy to see why drug companies are so adamantly opposed to products that are sure to undercut their profits — a point raised by Marlow. “Unfortunately, maybe it’s also a source of creative destruction for those who make a living out of tobacco control,” he added.

Dr. Gilbert Ross, medical and executive director of the American Council on Science and Health, has also stated of Big Pharma’s powerful influence: “Some of the group’s advocating for this anti-science,



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anti-public health charade ... are influenced by undisclosed but generous financial support from the pharmaceutical industry, which is devoted to keeping effective competition to its poorly performing nicotine replacement therapy patches, gums, and drugs off the market.”

Hopefully, for the sake of public health, the continued release of studies such as that of the R Street Institute will have increasingly more influence on localities around the country than releases by federal agencies, relying on bought-and-paid-for “science.”



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