

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 15, 2019**  
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## **Arizona Kids Will Kick Butts – and Juul – on March 20** *State Leaders Challenged to Fight Skyrocketing Epidemic of Youth E-Cigarette Use*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Kids in Arizona will unite against tobacco use on March 20 as they join thousands of young people nationwide to mark Kick Butts Day, an annual day of youth activism sponsored by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. More than 1,000 events are planned across the United States (see below for a list of local events).

This year, kids are focused on kicking Juul, the e-cigarette that has become enormously popular among youth across the country.

While cigarette smoking among high school students nationwide has fallen to 8.1 percent, e-cigarette use among high schoolers rose by an alarming 78 percent in 2018 alone – to 20.8 percent of the student population. In 2018, more than 3.6 million middle and high school students used e-cigarettes. U.S. public health leaders have called youth e-cigarette use an “epidemic” that is addicting a new generation of kids.

In Arizona, 16.1 percent of high school students use e-cigarettes, while 7.1 percent smoke cigarettes. Tobacco use claims 8,300 lives in Arizona and costs the state \$2.4 billion in health care bills each year.

On Kick Butts Day, youth and health advocates are calling for strong action to reverse the youth e-cigarette epidemic. In particular, they are calling on the Food and Drug Administration, states and cities to ban all flavored tobacco products, including e-cigarettes in flavors like cotton candy, gummy bear and mango that tempt kids. Other effective strategies to reduce youth tobacco use include laws raising the tobacco sale age to 21, significant tobacco tax increases, comprehensive smoke-free laws and well-funded tobacco prevention programs.

“This year on Kick Butts Day, we’re challenging policy makers at every level to do their part to reverse the youth e-cigarette epidemic and continue driving down youth tobacco use,” said Matthew L. Myers, President of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. “We cannot allow e-cigarettes, especially Juul, to addict another generation and reverse the enormous progress we’ve made in reducing youth tobacco use.”

Key facts about e-cigarettes include:

- The main cause of the youth e-cigarette epidemic is Juul, which looks like a computer flash drive, is small and easy to hide, delivers a powerful dose of nicotine, and comes in kid-friendly flavors like mango, fruit and mint. According to the manufacturer, each Juul “pod” (cartridge) delivers as much nicotine as a pack of 20 cigarettes.
- E-cigarettes pose serious health risks for kids. [The U.S. Surgeon General](#) has found that youth use of nicotine in any form – including e-cigarettes – is unsafe, causes addiction and can harm

the developing adolescent brain, affecting learning, memory and attention. Studies also show that young people who use e-cigarettes are more likely to become cigarette smokers.

On Kick Butts Day, youth join in creative events including signing pledges to be tobacco-free, learning about the harmful chemicals in tobacco products and organizing rallies at state capitols.

In Arizona, activities include:

On March 16, students from **Bullhead Opting Out of Tobacco** from the **Mohave County Tobacco Use Prevention Program** in **Fort Mohave** will be setting up mock gravestones designed by 5<sup>th</sup> graders from across the school district that include facts about the dangers of smoking and chewing tobacco. These will be displayed at Bullhead City Middle School. Time: 10:00 AM. Location: 1062 Hancock Road, Fort Mohave. Contact: Antonina Martorano (928) 299-1810.

**BOSS members** at **Arizona State University** in **Tempe** will be at the student pavilion to advocate and petition for a smoke-free campus. They will be educating fellow students about the downsides of tobacco and the benefits of not smoking, gathering signatures, and providing cessation resources. Time: 8:00 AM. Location: 400 East Orange Street. Tempe Contact: Kira Perry (480) 797-2447.

**Lake Havasu High School** is working to be the first tobacco-free generation. Students from **Early Childhood Education FCCLA** will be encouraging their peers to sign a petition to request that the city of Lake Havasu raise the tobacco sale age to 21 and to commit to being tobacco-free by signing a pledge wall. Location: 2675 Palo Verde Boulevard South, Lake Havasu. Contact: Cathy Bagby (928) 580-0276.

Students from the **Kingman Youth Coalition Beating Up Teen Tobacco** will be holding a “Lucky to Be Tobacco/Nicotine Free!” event at American Woodmark in **Kingman**. They will provide education about the dangers of tobacco and e-cigarettes and ask everyone to ‘kick butts.’ Time: 8:00 AM. Location: 4475 E. Mohave Airport Drive, Kingman. Contact: Susan Williams (928) 753-0794 ext. 4165.

All events will take place March 20 unless otherwise indicated. For a full list of Kick Butts Day activities in Arizona, visit [www.kickbuttsday.org/map](http://www.kickbuttsday.org/map). Additional information about tobacco, including state-by-state statistics, can be found at [www.tobaccofreekids.org](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org).

