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California 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 California 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 California, 17.3 percent of high school students use e-cigarettes, while 5.4 percent smoke cigarettes. Tobacco use claims 40,000 lives in California and costs the state \$13.3 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.

In California, youth advocates are urging Sacramento and other localities to prohibit the sale of all flavored tobacco products, as a growing number of California cities and counties have already done, and also supporting statewide legislation to ban flavored tobacco products.

“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 California, activities include:

On March 18th, students from **CYAN** (the California Youth Advocacy Network) will be hosting their annual **Youth Quest** at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in Sacramento, CA. The theme is “This E.N.D.S Now: The Products May Change, but the Addiction Remains.” This one day event will bring together over 300 youth to learn about youth addiction to e-cigarettes. Contact: Kim Homer Vagadori (530) 304-1958.

Students from Club Live at **James Rutter Middle School** in **Sacramento** will celebrate Kick Butts Day by running an interactive carnival where their fellow students will learn about the dangers of tobacco use through games, including Dice Disease, Tobacco Take a Walk, Tattoos not Tobacco, Tobacco Trivia, and Knockout Tobacco. There will also be a display showing all the different areas of the body that are affected by smoking. Time: 11:05 AM and 11:55 AM. Location: 7350 Palmer House Drive, Sacramento. Contact: Laura Poppers (916) 422-3232.

Students from **Open Valley Independent Study**, **Del Puerto High School**, and **Patterson High School** will organize a cigarette butt cleanup on the streets of Patterson, beginning at Patterson High School to the town circle and back. Time: 12:30 PM. Location: 200 N. 7th Street, Patterson. Contact: Richard Kidder (209) 892-4745.

Local youth from **Ukiah** will be joining **Mendocino County HHSA/Public Health Tobacco Control** to take a stand against tobacco. At the Ukiah Boys & Girls Club, everyone is invited to sign a pledge to go tobacco-free. Students from Pomolita Middle School and youth advocates from **GASP (TCP)** and **California Friday Night Live** will get rid of cigarette butts on the grounds of Todd Grove Park. Time: 3 PM. Location: Todd Grove Park, 600 Live Oak Avenue, Ukiah. Contact: Katherine Fengler (707) 367-3984.

Students from **Quincy High School** in partnership with the **Plumas County Public Health Agency Tobacco Use Reduction Program** will be covering the **Quincy Courthouse** lawn on Kick Butts Day with oversized pinwheels with information on Big Tobacco’s tactics that specifically target youth. Time: 7:30 AM. Location: 520 Main Street, Quincy. Contact: Melodie Bennett (530) 258-6807.

Students at **Elliott Education Center** in **Modesto** will be taking a stand against tobacco and educating their peers through games, informational displays and tombstones depicting the deadly effects of smoking. Students will also be signing a pledge wall to show their commitment to being tobacco-free. Time: 10 AM. Location: 1440 Sunrise Avenue, Modesto. Contact: Fred Johnston (209) 241-8009.

The Anchor from **Student Health & Wellness** at **Santa Barbara City College** will be displaying 130 large cigarettes in Friendship Plaza to represent the 1,300 tobacco-related deaths that occur in the country

every day. Representatives will also be on hand to share information on the dangers of tobacco and e-cigarettes, and provide resources for cessation. Time: 10 AM. Location: 721 Cliff Drive, Santa Barbara. Contact: Katy Magnani (425) 830-4771.

On March 22, students at **Fairfield-Suisun Public Safety Academy** in **Fairfield** will be taking a stand against tobacco through a series of schoolwide events. The day will include a scavenger hunt, an infographic contest and a video public service announcement contest. Finally, there will be three assemblies where students will learn about the importance of being a leader and an advocate for being smoke-free. Time: 10:30 AM. Location: 230 Atlantic Avenue, Fairfield. Contact: Melissa Johnson (707) 359-9317.

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

