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**CONTACTS: Bryan Fisher, (202) 868-4825**  
**Boot Bullwinkle, (202) 481-9343**

## **Kansas 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 Kansas 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 Kansas, 10.6 percent of high school students use e-cigarettes, while 7.2 percent smoke cigarettes. Tobacco use claims 4,400 lives in Kansas and costs the state \$1.1 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 Kansas, activities include:

**Holton's Resist** anti-tobacco team will engage **Holton Middle School** students in Tobacco 101 Training to highlight the dangers of tobacco and help them sign a pledge wall to commit to being tobacco-free and encourage peers and loved ones to quit smoking. Time: 10:00 AM. Location: 900 Iowa Avenue, Holton. Contact: Debbie Harshaw (785) 364-6435.

The **Junction City Youth Council** will mark Kick Butts Day in front of the **B&B Multiplex Theater** with personalized chalk murals designed and drawn by students to demonstrate what living tobacco-free means and encourage others to make the same commitment. Time: 4:30 PM. Location: 1016 W 6th Street, Junction City. Contact: Michelle Hawthorne (785) 762-5788.

On March 21, Tobacco Free Wichita's youth group, **RESIST**, will welcome students to a free Smoke-Free Movie Night at **The Donut Whole**. The featured movie is McFarland USA, an inspiring movie starring Kevin Costner that models healthy activities for young people to build into their daily routines and shows how anyone can be a champion. Details: 5:30 PM. Location: 1720 E Douglas Avenue, Wichita. Contact: Elena Devora (620) 655-1822.

On March 23, the **Wichita Thunder hockey team** will welcome Tobacco Free Wichita's youth to their evening game in honor of Kick Butts Day to drive home the importance of tobacco-free living and promote their tobacco-free parks and trails initiative. Time: 6:00 PM. Location: 505 W Maple Street #100, Wichita. Contact: Elena Devora (620) 655-1822.

All events will take place March 20 unless otherwise indicated. For a full list of Kick Butts Day activities in Kansas, 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).