

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 15, 2019**  
**CONTACTS: Camille Ahearn, (202) 868-4827**  
**Boot Bullwinkle, (202) 481-9343**

## **Pennsylvania 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 Pennsylvania 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 Pennsylvania, 11.3 percent of high school students use e-cigarettes, while 8.7 percent smoke cigarettes. Tobacco use claims 22,000 lives in Pennsylvania and costs the state \$6.4 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 Pennsylvania, activities include:

On March 18, students at **Titusville Middle School** will learn about the dangers of vaping and the impact of secondhand smoke during the lunch periods. Students will receive temporary tattoos to show Big Tobacco they are #NotAReplacement for dying smokers. Time: 11 AM. Location: 415 Water Street, Titusville. Contact: Ashleigh English (814) 657-7263.

Students at **Upper Merion Area Middle School** will participate in a Speak Out, where they will take part in roundtable discussions designed to encourage them to speak out against tobacco. The event will also include educational displays about e-cigarettes and tobacco, including the “aMAZE-ing Path of Deception, a tobacco pledge wall, and a photo station where they can get their photo taken as they “kick Ciggy Butt.” **Students Against Destructive Decisions** and the **CAST Club** will help facilitate activities. Time: 3 PM. Location: 450 Keebler Road, King of Prussia. Contact: Susan Shelton (610) 304-5533.

LGBT student leaders at **Quakertown High School**, with support from the **Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center** will celebrate Kick Butts Day by building a collaborative banner that will be displayed outside the **Gay Straight Alliance** classroom. Time: 3 PM. Location: 600 Park Avenue, Quakertown. Contact: Annemarie Shankweiler (484) 821-7650.

Students from **Hopewell Elementary School** in **Oxford** will celebrate Kick Butts Day with a schoolwide Healthy Lungs Walk. Students and teachers will walk around the track to learn about smoke-free air and healthy exercise. In addition, representatives from the **Chester County Health Department** will educate students on the dangers of vaping and smoking. Time: 9 AM. Location: 602 Garfield Street, Oxford. Contact: Erika Seaman (610) 283-0247.

On March 22, students, faculty and staff from the **Freeland Middle School** will celebrate Kick Butts Day with a dodgeball tournament to “knock out” tobacco from the school. Kids will pledge to live tobacco-free and learn about the dangers of tobacco use through educational displays. Time: 12 PM. Location: 400 Alvin Street, Freeland. Contact: Nicole Meckes (570) 956-3378.

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