

OP-EDS

Michael Bloomberg's war on vaping puts criminals over consumers

By **Martin Cullip**

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Former New York Mayor **Michael Bloomberg** has taken to one of his own news channels to deliver a broadside against **flavored vaping products**. This diatribe is remarkable for its flagrant contradictions, staggering lack of self-awareness, and complete lack of understanding about harm reduction.

Bloomberg warns that the Food and Drug Administration's **recent authorization** of flavored vaping products will "prove deadly for kids." He

paints a lurid picture of an America supposedly on the verge of societal collapse, with predatory companies handing out mango-flavored addiction to children on every street corner. The Trump administration and the FDA must reject this prohibitionist theater and help smokers trying to kick their deadly habit.

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Bloomberg seemingly cannot fathom the simple fact that the problems he describes are the result of the very prohibitionist policies he has spent years funding and promoting around the world.

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Bloomberg has reportedly poured \$1.6 billion into organizations campaigning against vaping and other safer nicotine products through heavily funded advocacy groups, universities, nongovernmental organizations, and discredited international bodies such as the **World Health Organization**. An entire industry has emerged dedicated to falsely portraying smoke-free nicotine products as though they are no different from cigarettes. While claiming to fight Big Tobacco, these Bloomberg-funded campaigns have only ended up protecting the cigarette trade.

The central flaw in Bloomberg's fact-free argument is his refusal to distinguish between smoking and nicotine use. Smoking kills because of combustion. It is the inhalation of toxic smoke from burning tobacco that causes cancer, heart disease, emphysema, and countless other illnesses. Smoke-free nicotine products dramatically reduce those risks because they eliminate combustion entirely.

This is a position supported by a growing body of scientific evidence and acknowledged by numerous public health authorities. **Vaping** products, nicotine pouches, and heated tobacco products are not risk-free, but they are far safer than cigarettes and have proven enormously popular worldwide among adults seeking alternatives to smoking.

Bloomberg dismisses flavors as cynical marketing tools aimed at children, but research consistently shows that nontobacco flavors play an important role in helping adults switch away from combustible cigarettes. Adult smokers

seeking to quit prefer flavors that, quite understandably, do not remind them of smoking. Unsurprisingly, flavor bans, which make the experience of quitting cigarettes needlessly dull and difficult, increase cigarette smoking.

Bloomberg also has a woefully limited understanding of the consequences of prohibition. He acknowledges that illegal flavored vaping products are flooding into the U.S. from [China](#) and elsewhere. But rather than recognizing this as the predictable outcome of restrictive policies, he bizarrely presents it as an argument for even more prohibition.

The widespread illicit vape market in the United States exists precisely because legal pathways have been obstructed by excessive FDA regulation and flavor bans championed by Bloomberg-funded groups. Consumers did not stop wanting flavored products because regulators disapproved of them. Demand remained, and the black market stepped in to meet it.

That is how prohibition always works. Bloomberg's preferred policies hand vast market opportunities to criminal networks while depriving consumers of regulated choices.

History repeatedly shows that attempts to prohibit widely demanded substances never eliminate use. They merely shift supply into illicit markets where products are unregulated, untaxed, and often more dangerous.

The Bloomborgs of the world never learn from these terrible mistakes and relentlessly push prohibition. None of

this means youth access should be ignored. Age restrictions, enforcement against underage sales, product standards, and sensible regulation are all valid policy recommendations. But there is a vast difference between responsible **regulation** and prohibitionist zealotry.

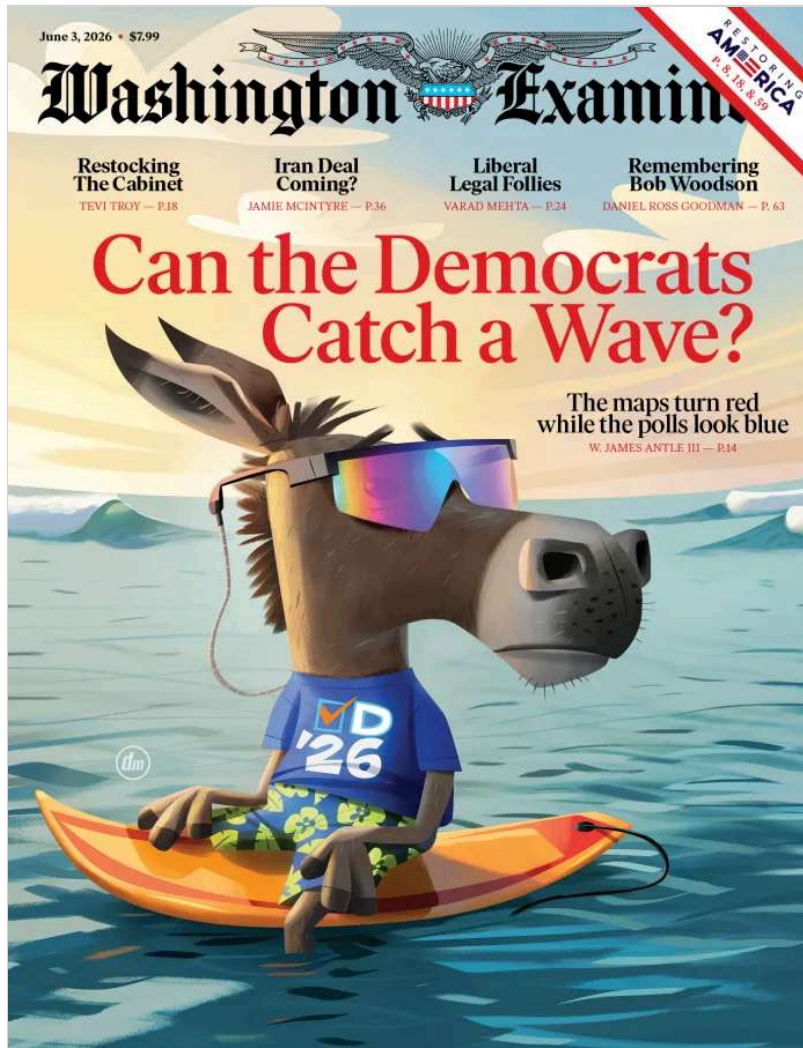
ILLICIT VAPES FLOODED OUR BORDERS. THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION IS FIGHTING BACK

A rational policy would prioritize reducing smoking-related disease by encouraging adults who smoke to switch to safer alternatives while enforcing strict controls on youth access. Bloomberg's approach does the opposite. It seeks to suppress the very products most capable of displacing cigarettes while fueling illicit markets in the process.

Far from solving the problem, Bloomberg's preferred policies are helping exacerbate it. The more aggressively he and his allies seek to suppress safer nicotine innovation, the clearer it becomes that they are fighting not merely against life-saving products, but against reality itself.

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