truth initiative
freedom from nicotine addiction

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Shopify's Removal of Online Vaping Stores Serves as Important Model to Prevent Illegal Online Nicotine Sales and Curb Youth Access

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 24, 2026) – Shopify's removal of online vaping stores from its platform is a meaningful step in closing channels that have helped make illegal e-cigarettes widely available and too easy for young people to obtain. We commend the coalition of state attorneys general and New York City that announced Shopify's action to address illegal e-cigarette sales facilitated through its services, including by terminating services to websites selling these products. Their previous call for accountability was warranted, and Shopify's response serves as a model for all companies powering online retail to ensure they are not enabling illegal sales of addictive nicotine products, including e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches.

The evidence is clear that online e-cigarette sales in particular have become a major loophole for illegal products and underage access. Truth Initiative research published earlier this year found that nearly 90% of online e-cigarette stores identified as using Shopify appeared to violate at least one requirement related to age verification, shipping, or adult signature upon delivery. These failures demonstrate how lax oversight online and weak enforcement can undermine youth protections and allow illegal products to reach consumers with minimal accountability.

Companies are aggressively targeting young people with youth-appealing products — including high-tech "smart" vapes and cheap disposable e-cigarettes — that often come in fruity flavors and contain high levels of nicotine. At the same time, the vast majority of e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches lack authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, making their presence on the market illegal. Together, all of this underscores the need for continued action across the online marketplace to protect young people from nicotine addiction.

Removing these online stores is an important action, but the responsibility does not end here. Every company that moves e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches from online storefronts to consumers — including online marketplaces, credit card companies, payment processors, shippers and retailers — must take action to stop illegal sales. Protecting young people from nicotine addiction requires a coordinated response that closes all the channels allowing these products to reach them.

About Truth Initiative
Truth Initiative® is a national nonprofit public health organization committed to a future free from lifelong addiction, fostering healthier lives and a more resilient nation. Our mission is to prevent youth and young adult nicotine addiction and empower quitting for all. Through our evidence-based, market-leading cessation intervention, EX® Program, and national public education campaigns, we lead the fight against youth and young adult tobacco use. Learn more at truthinitiative.org.

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