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My name is Sofia Aguilar; I am junior high student at Butte Vista School. I was very concerned when I learned that children walking to school constantly see tobacco signs and ads as they pass by stores on their way to school. Apparently, 100% of stores located near schools sell lots of candy flavored tobacco products such as cherry, grape and peach that can be easily mistaken for actual candy in gas stations and small stores.

We know that youth are 3 times more likely to be influenced by tobacco advertisements than adults. All of these stores near schools sell lots of tobacco products and are making millions of dollars specifically on products such as candy flavored cigarillos. And, I regret to say, that many of their daily customers are students walking to school who pass by their convincing signs and advertisements every day. The worst part is that these youth sometimes don't even know what products they are buying.

Personally I know some students at my school who stop at these stores every day. They are innocent victims of these appealing ads and sadly buy these types of products, not knowing these harmful products will eventually kill them. It frustrates me to know fellow students are being manipulated!

I think that if we can regulate the amount of unhealthy ads put up around and in these small stores near schools, we can help our local youth to make healthier choices.

Sofia Aguilar

SASC Youth