

Youth Across America Rally Over Vaping Epidemic for truth® National Day of Action

Amid growing national concern over e-cigarettes, youth smoking prevention campaign holds protest event outside JUUL's Washington D.C. offices in conjunction with youth rallies across America

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Oct. 9, 2019) – As cases of lung disease and death resulting from the vaping epidemic continue to sweep across the nation, **truth**, the highly effective youth smoking prevention campaign from Truth Initiative®, is kicking off its National Day of Action. Young people are protesting outside JUUL's Washington, D.C. offices. In conjunction with the D.C. event, thousands of youth will also host their own protests across the U.S. The protesters will encourage fellow teens and young adults to #DITCHJUUL, alluding to the most popular e-cigarette manufacturer that has played a leading role in the youth vaping epidemic¹, as well as other similar vaping products. The **truth** activists are also calling on the FDA to regulate the products and remove all flavored e-cigarettes, including mint and menthol.

The National Day of Action's signature rally, hosted by **truth**, will kick off at 8 AM ET on October 9 at 1000 F ST NW, JUUL's Washington, D.C., offices. Youth activists, as well as local organizations and colleges from the D.C. area will participate. During the rally, former young vapers turned activists will speak out about the e-cigarette epidemic, share their stories and encourage other young people to #DITCHJUUL alongside pep rally-style bands and mascots and the **truth** DJ truck.

"We hear story after story from teens and young adults whose lives have been devastated by e-cigarettes. No one knows all the long or short-term health effects of vaping, and America's youth are making it clear with this week's rallies that they'll no longer allow e-cigarette manufacturers like JUUL to treat their generation like lab rats for unregulated products," said Robin Koval, CEO and president of Truth Initiative.

As part of **truth's** National Day of Action, youth activists are taking the #DITCHJUUL rally cry to their own campuses and communities across the country, with more than 200 additional events happening this week projected to draw nearly 70,000 young participants.

"As a former JUUL user who suffered serious medical complications which required hospitalization and an inhaler, I believe that no teenager should have to go through the withdrawals and health issues like I did," said Gianluca Barecchia, a 21-year-old **truth** college leader and student at Dominican College. "I'm passionate about helping youth and young adults understand the dangers of JUUL which is why I am participating in the National Day of Action. **truth** has made a significant impact on helping me to encourage other young people to take action on tobacco use in their communities."

The National Day of Action builds on the August 2019 launch of the **truth** "[Tested on Humans](#)" campaign featuring the "king of pop culture" and social media star, [Doug the Pug](#), during the 2019 MTV Video Music Awards, which highlights how no one knows the long or short-term health effects of e-cigarettes. **truth** also launched a first-of-its-kind text messaging program

¹ Truth Initiative. *Behind the explosive growth of JUUL.* <https://truthinitiative.org/research-resources/emerging-tobacco-products/behind-explosive-growth-juul>.

[“This is Quitting”](#) earlier this year, which provides free, anonymous resources for young people looking to quit vaping. To-date more than 54,000 young people have enrolled.

America’s E-Cigarette Crisis

The youth e-cigarette epidemic is getting worse with an alarming 27.5% of high schoolers vaping up from 20.8 % in 2018, according to preliminary data from the 2019 National Youth Tobacco Survey show. Data from Monitoring the Future find that youth e-cigarette use has more than doubled since 2017 - in every grade (including middle schoolers) and 5 million youth now vape in the U.S. The research also shows that mint and menthol e-cigarette use rose from 51.2% in 2018 to 63.9% once other fruit and candy flavors became harder to come by.

Meanwhile, the CDC announced that of the 1,080 vaping-related lung illnesses that have been reported from 48 states and one U.S. territory, 80% of the cases are under 35 years old and 16% are youth under age 18. Eighteen deaths have been confirmed. In response, the Trump administration announced that it would take measures to remove all flavored e-cigarettes from the market.

“It’s time to hit the stop button on this giant chemistry experiment being conducted on the public, a large portion of them teens and young adults,” said Koval. “The Food & Drug Administration must do its job and not let the tobacco industry stand in its way. Ending the youth e-cigarette epidemic starts with removing all flavored e-cigarettes including mint and menthol from the market now.”

Get Involved

Young people can join the thousands of other teens taking part in the National Day of Action by:

- [Signing a pledge](#) to tell JUUL to take responsibility for their actions.
- [Sharing their truth](#) on social media and telling everyone why they should #DITCHJUUL for good.

For more information on e-cigarettes, visit thetruth.com. For help with quitting vaping, visit thetruth.com/quit or text DITCHJUUL to 88709 for free resources.

About truth

truth is one of the largest and most successful youth smoking prevention campaigns. The campaign exposes the tactics of the tobacco industry, the truth about addiction and the health effects and social consequences of smoking. **truth** gives teens facts to make their own informed choices about tobacco use and inspires them to use their creativity in the fight against tobacco. The campaign is credited with preventing hundreds of thousands of teens from starting to smoke and is empowering this generation to end smoking for good. To learn more, visit thetruth.com. **truth** is part of Truth Initiative®, a national public health organization dedicated to achieving a culture where all youth and young adults reject tobacco. To learn more about Truth Initiative, visit truthinitiative.org.