

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 23, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you prepare to meet with President Xi Jinping, I write to urge you to press him on a threat that continues to harm American families, undercut law-abiding retailers, and enrich our foremost geopolitical adversary: the flood of illicit, unauthorized vaping products manufactured in China and smuggled into the United States.

I am encouraged that you have previously signaled your intention to raise this issue with President Xi, and I commend the aggressive enforcement your Administration has already undertaken. From Operation Vape Trail to the record maritime seizures that have taken millions of illegal devices off the supply chain, your Administration has sent a clear message. But as long as the source of these products remains untouched, the flow will continue. This must ultimately be solved at its origin, and no one is better positioned to raise this issue with President Xi than you.

The scale is staggering. Thousands of distinct vaping products are currently sold on American shelves, the overwhelming majority of them illegal. A retail-scanner analysis of December 2025 sales found that nearly 70 percent of every dollar spent on e-cigarettes went to products the FDA never authorized, and 97.6 percent of disposable vape sales were unauthorized.¹ Chinese e-cigarette exports to the United States surpassed \$4 billion in 2025 alone, and rather than falling under enforcement pressure, they continued to rise through the final quarter of the year.²

Most importantly, China has the power to stop this but has chosen not to. China's own State Tobacco Monopoly Administration exercises extensive control over the e-cigarette industry, including exports, and Chinese law expressly bars manufacturers from shipping e-cigarettes to any country where those products are illegal. Beijing enforces this rule selectively while allowing hundreds of millions of illegal e-cigarettes to be exported to the U.S. annually, generating billions of dollars in revenue. This is a deliberate strategy that exploits gaps in U.S.

¹ Shoute, Vavara, et al. "Sales of Unauthorized E-Cigarettes in the United States, December 2025," *NEJM Evidence* vol. 5, no. 9 (2026), <https://evidence.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/EVIDpha2600137>.

² 2Firsts, *China's E-Cigarette Exports Fall Slightly to USD 10.6 Billion in 2025, U.S. Market Further Consolidates Lead* (1/20/26), <https://www.2firsts.com/news/chinas-e-cigarette-exports-drop-by-33-in-2025-to-10598-billion-us-remains-top-destination>.

enforcement. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) can direct regulators to enforce their own rules tomorrow if they choose.

Chinese manufacturers disguise shipments as everyday goods to evade customs, then market candy-flavored cartridges and toy-like designs in packaging styled to appeal to children. Many contain carcinogens, toxic additives, and heavy metals. The Department of Justice reports these products are sold near schools and military bases, putting minors and service members at risk. The emerging generation of Chinese “smart vapes,” which connect to smartphones, also raises a distinct cybersecurity threat if used by military personnel, potentially routing personal data and network access to the Chinese Communist Party.³ The illicit trade has further become a revenue stream for Mexican cartels and a vehicle for fentanyl-linked money laundering.

This is a public health crisis, a national security threat, and a trade-fairness failure at once. Honest American retailers who follow federal law are being undercut by a black market supplied almost entirely from a single country that profits while our families pay the price.

I respectfully ask that you urge President Xi to direct the State Tobacco Monopoly Administration to enforce its own export rules, to halt the manufacture and export of these illicit products, and to cooperate directly with U.S. enforcement agencies in stemming the flow at its source.

The CCP has the power to shut this trade down. I stand ready to work with your Administration to advance this shared priority.

Sincerely,



Ted Budd
United States Senator



Katie Britt
United States Senator



Tom Cotton
United States Senator



Mike Lee
United States Senator



Tommy Tuberville
United States Senator



Ashley Moody
United States Senator

³ Department of Homeland Security, “Data Security Business Advisory” (February 2021), https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/20_1222_data-security-business-advisory.pdf.



Thom Tillis
United States Senator



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