

Testimony of Naseeb Kibria

Maryland Resident

February 13, 2020

Senate Bill 233: Business Regulation - Flavored Tobacco Products – Prohibition

POSITION: SUPPORT

Thank you, Ayo. My testimony has two parts: first, I will summarize public health impacts of restricting the sale of mentholated cigarettes and then I will talk about flavored cigars. These impacts are what might be expected if Maryland were to restrict the sale of *only* menthol cigarettes or *only* flavored cigars.

Restricting menthol can have positive long term public health implications on current smokers. In 2017 Ontario, Canada restricted mentholated tobacco products, and one year after the policy, 63% of daily and 62% of occasional menthol smokers reported having made a quit attempt versus 43% of non-menthol smokers. In addition, 24% of daily and 20% of occasional menthol smokers quit smoking versus 14% of non-menthol smokers.

It is encouraging that the available data consistently suggest a similar policy in the U.S. may yield an even greater impact. Before the Ontario restriction, 15% of menthol smokers 16 years or older said they would quit, 60% said they would switch to non-menthol cigarettes, and 6% said they would use other flavored tobacco or e-cigarette products. For comparison, in the U.S., one study found 66% of young adult menthol smokers said they would quit, 18% said they would switch to non-menthol cigarettes, and 16% said they would use other tobacco products. A separate study also found 35% of adolescent and adult menthol smokers said they would quit smoking. The evidence also suggests African Americans, females, and those with less than a high school education are more likely to quit.

To the best of our knowledge, no studies have evaluated the impact of a flavored cigar restriction on its own. Nevertheless, researchers have modeled the projected impact of such a restriction. They found a nationwide restriction would prevent 15% of premature deaths from exclusive and regular cigar users. The authors also calculated that the number of current cigar smokers within each cohort of 18 year old adults would be reduced by approximately 112,000 users.

Thank you for your consideration. My colleague, Rajeev Cherukupalli, will now continue providing testimony.

Naseeb Kibria, MSE
Research Program Manager
Institute for Global Tobacco Control
Email: nkibria1@jhu.edu
Ph: 410-614-4427

The opinions expressed herein are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Johns Hopkins University.