



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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

SPONSOR: The President, *et al.* (By Request - Office of the Attorney General)

HEARING DATE: February 13, 2020

COMMITTEE: Finance

CONTACT: Intergovernmental Affairs Office, 301-780-8411

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 233 - Business Regulation - Flavored Tobacco Products – Prohibition**, which bans the manufacture, shipment, import, or sale of flavored tobacco products. The bill also makes it a misdemeanor to violate the ban.

Public health has made significant reductions in youth smoking with the help of legislation like Maryland's Clean Indoor Air Act of 2007 and the Federal Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act of 2009. However, today we have a new problem. Maryland's young people are using flavored vape and tobacco products at alarming rates. In Prince George's County, one in three high school students and one in four middle school students have tried an electronic vapor product.¹ Ninety percent of youth who have tried vaping used a product with flavoring other than tobacco.²

The brain is not fully developed until age 25.³ Nicotine has a devastating effect on the adolescent brain and may result in slowed brain function, increased addiction, and

¹ Prince George's County Health Department Vaping factsheet. Data source is the 2016 Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

² Prince George's County Health Department Vaping factsheet. Data source is the 2016 Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

³ Kathleen Raven, *Nicotine Addiction From Vaping Is a Bigger Problem Than Teens Realize* (YaleMedicine, Mar. 19, 2019), <https://www.yalemedicine.org/stories/vaping-nicotine-addiction/>.

emotional and psychiatric difficulties.⁴ Furthermore, there is substantial evidence that youth vaping increases the risk of using traditional cigarettes.⁵

The impact of nicotine is well-documented, but vaping products also include chemicals like flavorings, propellants, solvents, and oils.⁶ The long-term health impact of inhaling these chemicals is unknown. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is currently investigating more than 1,600 cases of people nationwide, including children as young as 13 years old, who have severe vaping-related lung illnesses and injuries.⁷ These findings reveal that dozens of patients have died from those illnesses and injuries.⁸ Banning flavored vaping products will deter young people from trying vaping.

Senate Bill 233 would also ban flavored tobacco products like menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars and cigarillos, a measure that is long overdue. From 2011 to 2015, sales of menthol cigarettes increased,⁹ while overall cigarette sales decreased. Menthol cigarettes are the only flavored cigarette product left on the market after the federal Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act of 2009. Yet young people are more likely to try menthol-flavored cigarettes and then more likely to become addicted with this flavoring present.¹⁰

Additionally, CDC data indicates menthol products have been “aggressively marketed” to young people and African Americans.¹¹ African American men smoke cigars and cigarillos more than other racial/ethnic groups and the majority of young cigar users use flavored products.¹² Thus, the clear purpose for flavored tobacco products—flavors such as grape, vanilla, apple, or menthol flavors—is addicting new, young users. Passage of Senate Bill 233 is vitally important to protect our young people of color, who have been targeted by the tobacco industry’s aggressive marketing.

⁴ Goriounova NA, Mansvelter HD. Nicotine exposure during adolescence alters the rules for prefrontal cortical synaptic plasticity during adulthood. *Front Synaptic Neurosci.* 2012;4:3. Published 2012 Aug 2. doi:10.3389/fnsyn.2012.00003.

⁵ American Lung Association, <https://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/smoking-facts/e-cigarettes-and-lung-health.html>.

⁶ Pulled directly from the October 2019 Prince George’s County Health Department Vaping factsheet. Information source is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

⁷ Pulled directly from the October 2019 Prince George’s County Health Department Vaping factsheet. Information source is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Laura Bach, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Impact of Menthol Cigarettes on Youth Smoking Initiation and Health Disparities (Feb. 3, 2020), <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/factsheets/0390.pdf>.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Smoking & Tobacco Use: African Americans and Tobacco Use,” <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/disparities/african-americans/index.htm> (last visited Feb. 13, 2020).

¹² Truth Initiative, *The Truth About Little Cigars, Cigarillos, & Cigars* (April 2019), <https://truthinitiative.org/sites/default/files/media/files/2019/03/Cigars-Fact-Sheet-10-2017.pdf>.

A vote for Senate Bill 233 is a vote to reduce lung-related disease and death in Maryland. For the reasons stated above, the Office of the Prince George's County Executive **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 233** and asks for a **FAVORABLE** report.