



SB 233 – Business Regulation – Flavored Tobacco Products – Prohibition

Committee: Finance

Date: February 13, 2020

POSITION: Support

The Maryland Coalition of Families: Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) helps families who care for someone with behavioral health needs. Using personal experience as parents, caregivers and other loved ones, our staff provide one-to-one peer support and navigation services to parents and caregivers of young people with mental health issues and to any loved one who cares for someone with a substance use or gambling issue.

MCF strongly supports SB 233.

Parents and caregivers of children with mental health or substance use problems are a key population that we serve. These youth are at high risk of using electronic smoking devices, and many do. Parents are distraught, but can do little to prevent or control the use of e-cigarettes by their child. These young people face a lifetime of addiction to nicotine. While the long-term health consequences of using e-cigarettes remains to be seen, we know that nicotine has a harmful effect on the developing adolescent brain. Also, we know that addiction to nicotine carries a tremendous economic cost.

Surveys and studies have clearly shown that flavored e-cigarettes especially appeal to youth, and the manufacturers of flavored e-cigarettes have targeted youth in their marketing efforts. The use of e-cigarettes by youth has reached epidemic proportions, and there is consensus that by banning flavored e-cigarettes, fewer youth would take up the habit and become addicted.

Given this, the federal government recently put restrictions on flavored e-cigarettes. Unfortunately, there are a number of large holes in the current regulations. SB 233 would close these gaps, and help to keep a generation of Maryland youth from becoming addicted to nicotine.

We urge a favorable report on SB 233.

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