



**The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
Montgomery County Branch
SB 410-The Maryland Local Tobacco Control Bill
TESTIMONY
Thursday, February 11, 2021**

Good afternoon Senator Kelley and to the members of the Senate Finance Committee. Thank you for holding this important hearing on SB 410 – The Maryland Local Tobacco Control bill sponsored by Sen. Benjamin Kramer.

On behalf of the Montgomery County Maryland Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). **We submit this testimony in support of SB 410.**

For 111 years the NAACP has been in the forefront of securing civil rights and racial equality for all. Here in Montgomery County Maryland, the NAACP Montgomery County branch has forged relationships with community and county leaders, to protect and promote the civil rights of every resident of the county, particularly African Americans and communities of color.

Throughout the years, the tobacco industry has targeted and profited from the commercial use of tobacco products in communities across the country, especially in largely African American and communities of color. Researchers have found that stores in predominantly Black neighborhoods were up to 10 times more likely to display tobacco ads inside and outside than retailers in areas with fewer Black residents. The results of the continued sale and use of these products, has been a myriad of health issues that disproportionately affect our communities.

Here in Montgomery County, in 2019 the County Council passed a bill banning smoking in outdoor areas where food is served. The ban applies to patios, decks and porches. Smoking inside restaurants and bars has been banned since 2003. Since then, the county has restricted smoking in parks and on bus stops, and prohibited e-cigarettes wherever smoking is forbidden.

It is estimated that about 34 million adults smoked cigarettes, and nearly 90 percent of smokers tried their first cigarette or first use of tobacco product by age 18. As of 2016, 9.6% of all Montgomery County high school students were using some form of tobacco product. As of 2016, 10% of Montgomery County minority high school students were using some form of tobacco product. Since the recent ban on smoking in public places, there has been surge in the flavored e-cigarettes sales and use, again targeted at our young people. The E-Cigs or Vape products may even be more addictive and harmful.

The NAACP Montgomery County Branch supports SB 410 as it will return to the county or locality's authority to regulate tobacco and related products. Local governments' ability to regulate tobacco is needed as the tobacco industry has a history of targeting predominately Black and Brown communities especially here in Montgomery County.

Thank you