



## Written Testimony in support of SB 410 to the Senate Finance Committee

February 11, 2021

Submitted by Meghan Kissell, Regional Advocacy Director, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids submits these written comments in support of SB 410: Cigarettes, Other Tobacco Products, and Electronic Smoking Devices - Local Law Authorization. The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids is the nation's largest non-profit, non-governmental advocacy organization solely devoted to reducing tobacco use and its deadly toll by advocating for public policies that prevent kids from using tobacco, help smokers quit and protect everyone from secondhand smoke.

Even though Maryland has made great strides in reducing tobacco use, tobacco use remains the number one preventable cause of premature death and disease in Maryland and the nation, killing over 7,500 residents every year.<sup>1</sup> The scientific evidence shows that the most effective way to reduce tobacco use is through a comprehensive approach. This includes promoting and funding cessation programs, removing flavored tobacco products that lure kids to a deadly addiction, and by giving local jurisdictions the tools necessary to enact and enforce tobacco control policies that make sense for their community.

The strongest, most innovative and effective tobacco control policies have most often originated at the local level, yet Local governments in Maryland have been stripped of their power to fully protect residents from the devastating effects of tobacco use due to a contentious 2013 court ruling (*Altadis v. Prince George's County*) — brought on by the tobacco industry — preventing them from passing new laws regulating tobacco products. This prohibits local governments from responding to what causes people to use tobacco in their communities — stifling progress in reducing use, especially among young people and ultimately hurting the health of Maryland's residents.

While the state has made great strides in reducing youth smoking, state ties the hands of local government. SB 410 will authorize localities to enact and enforce local laws regulating the sale and distribution of cigarettes, other tobacco products and electronic smoking devices to fit the needs of their communities.

When the state prevents communities from passing their own laws, they silence the voice of the people, and hurt the communities' health, safety, and economic wellbeing. Our state tobacco control laws should be seen as a floor, not a ceiling, for how to respond to the preventable health crisis in Baltimore. For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report on SB 410.

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<sup>1</sup> National: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), "The Health Consequences of Smoking – 50 Years of Progress A Report of the Surgeon General 2014. State: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs—2014*, [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/best\\_practices/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/best_practices/).