



The Honorable C.T. Wilson
House Economic Matters Committee, Chair
231 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

March 28, 2024

RE: SB 1056 - Cigarettes, Other Tobacco Products, and Electronic Smoking Devices -
Revisions (Tobacco Retail Modernization Act of 2024)

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Wilson,

I am writing to you as Finnan Beals-Simon, student/youth advocate, living in Silver Spring, to express my support for SB 1056, the Tobacco Retail Modernization Act of 2024. I support this bill because as a senior at Springbrook High School in MCPS, I can tell you that vaping has become so common among people my age, largely because it is so accessible and normalized. It's very common to see someone vaping in the back of the class, especially when there is a sub, but even when the teacher is there. I have even been in an anti-vaping assembly where people are vaping one row ahead of me. Before my dad quit, I would walk into his office so I could use his computer to play games with my friends, but I would be immediately hit by the stench of tobacco and I was lightheaded immediately. Like many people, especially now, my dad started using tobacco products in high school, and just like many others, he couldn't quit until well into my life.

Vaping is clearly an issue among minors with data from the CDC stating that in 2023 10% of middle schoolers and high schoolers vape in the US, but why? Young people are attracted to vapes because of the fun flavors, and its marketing as being safer than smoking. These youths are likely blindsided by the addiction and difficulty of quitting that await them. My Dad quit 10 years ago and he still has to chew nicotine gum to prevent withdrawals.

With all of these issues being so apparent and current measures like sharing the dangers of vaping in health classes and anti-vaping assemblies clearly not doing enough, why do you need *me* to tell you that these obvious problems are existent and not being solved? As elected officials you should be proactive about fixing these issues as it affects the lives of your constituents. As elected officials, you should care about the lives of your constituents more than the money from the tobacco industry, but you clearly don't as you have not taken nearly enough steps to curb the issue of tobacco use by the youth. These problems should have been solved the moment they became apparent. Big tobacco needs to be held accountable for marketing to kids and we need more personal measures like counseling and support groups in schools so these tools can be readily accessible to those who the problem heavily affects. I urge you to vote in favor of SB 1056, the Tobacco Retail Modernization Act of 2024.

Thank you for your consideration and for taking a stand with me.

Sincerely,
Finnan Beals-Simon
Youth Activism Project