

SB 1056 - Zoom group LLC

My name is Mansoor Anvari. I have been operating multiple businesses in Maryland for the last 29 years. **I oppose SB 1056**. Some of my stores are listed below;

Waterloo Exxon-7930 Washington Blvd, Jessup, Md 20794 (10 employees)

Lyndwood Exxon- 6070 Marshalee Dr, Elkridge, Md 21075 (6 employees)

Johns Hopkins Exxon- 7570 Montpelier Rd, Laurel 20723 (15 employees)

Columbia Liberty- 6425 Dobbin Center way, Columbia, Md 21045 (6 employees)

Gude Drive Liberty- 1298 E Gude Drive, Rockville, Md 20850 (10 employees)

Jessup Bp- 8810 Washington Blvd, Jessup, Md 20794 (6 employees)

Middletown shell-4304 Old national Pike, Middletown, Md 21769 (7 employees)

Shell Food Mart- 5707 Cherrywood Ln, Greenbelt, Md 20770 ( 9 employees)

In the state of Maryland, as business owners, we have made a huge initiative to follow all of the rules, regulations and licensing procedures in order to sell non combustible tobacco, e-cigarettes and Nicotine Pouches.

The registers at gas stations and the software used are very sophisticated. These registers are set up so when you ring up tobacco products, devices or any vape products you scan the person's Driver's License to verify their age. That would be the only way the sale can be completed. In addition, the tobacco inspectors come to the stores, undercover, to check to see if we are in compliance with the state laws. They check to make sure we are not selling to anyone under the age of 21. We also have signs posted throughout the store that reads "you must be 21 to purchase tobacco products".

The data confirms that the customers are moving away from combustible tobacco products to non combustible, E cigarettes and Nicotine pouches, resulting in losses in combustible products. The non combustible tobacco products make up 16% to 20% of the tobacco category in my stores. Imagine banning the sales of these products in our small businesses and the impact that has on our sales, profitability, employees and foot traffic. Our small businesses are already under pressure with reduced sales and demand after Covid. Passing SB 1056, will further result in losing more customers and foot traffic in our stores.

As you may be aware, in 2024, Maryland has proposed multiple bills to increase the tobacco tax by \$7.50, reduce the lottery commissions for retailers, implementing I Lottery, and now SB 1056 proposes to ban the E cigarettes and pods from convenience stores.

Please think about the small independent owners. I employ more than 75 people who are trained to serve the State of Maryland customers and communities. After almost 30 years, I hope to have my small businesses to carry on for my next generations of sons, daughters and

grandchildren. To be able to do that, the State shall protect and support the small independent convenience stores and not put a higher burden on their operations.

I oppose SB 1056 because it not only jeopardizes my business but it also jeopardizes the future for many small businesses, all the customers and the livelihoods of all the employees that run these stores. Taking away the convenience of walking into our store to buy e-cigs and other tobacco products will cause many economic hardships for us. The Impact of this bill will be felt 5 years down the road when that local small business, mom and pop store is abandoned and in ruins after many years of providing for this economy.

I would like to end by asking you to read a couple of quotation from former presidents below:

“Small Businesses Are the Backbone of Our Economy and the Cornerstones of Our Communities”

-Barack Obama

"Entrepreneurs and their small enterprises are responsible for almost all the economic growth in the United States."

-Ronald Regan

“Drive the economy and add to society. Small business owners create jobs and drive innovation, leading to a dynamic, prosperous and progressive society.”

--Ronald Regan

I ask you not to favor SB 1056

Thank you.

Mansoor Anvari

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