



# NAACP

Maryland  
STATE CONFERENCE

March 7, 2024

Finance  
Maryland General Assembly  
Annapolis, Maryland

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

Members of the Committee,

I am writing to offer the strong support of the Maryland NAACP for Senate Bill 1056, sponsored by Senator Kramer. This bill is a critical step forward in addressing the devastating impact that tobacco has had on communities of color in our state.

For decades, the tobacco industry has targeted communities of color with aggressive marketing tactics and predatory advertising. As a result, African American and other minority populations suffer disproportionately from tobacco-related illnesses and deaths. The statistics are alarming: African American adults have the highest smoking related diseases of any racial or ethnic group in the United States, such as lung cancer and heart disease exact a heavy toll on people of color.

Senate Bill 1056 addresses this public health crisis by taking several important measures. By prohibiting the display of cigarettes, other tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices for sale unless located behind a counter, this bill will reduce the visibility of these harmful products and discourage impulse purchases, especially among our youth. Additionally, requiring certain licensed retailers to verify an individual's date of birth before selling tobacco products will help prevent underage access to these addictive substances.

Furthermore, by altering the application fee for a county license to sell cigarettes at retail, Senate Bill 1056 recognizes the financial burden that tobacco imposes on our communities. The revenue generated from this fee increase can be used to fund tobacco prevention and cessation programs, as well as other initiatives aimed at improving the health and well-being of communities of color.

But beyond the economic and public health implications, Senate Bill 1056 is a matter of social justice. It is a declaration that every individual, regardless of race or socioeconomic status, deserves the opportunity to live a healthy and fulfilling life, free from the grip of addiction and disease. It is a statement against the exploitation of vulnerable communities by powerful corporate interests.

I urge members of the Senate Committee on Finance for a favorable report of Senate Bill 1056. Let us send a clear message that the health and well-being of our communities are paramount, and that we will not allow the tobacco industry to continue its assault on our most vulnerable populations.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

In Service,

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