



Maryland Center for Health Equity
2242 SPH Building (# 255)
College Park, Maryland 20742-2611

March 7th 2024

The Honorable Pam Beidle
Senate Finance Committee, Chair
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East Wing
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

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

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Beidle,

My name is Dr. Francesca Weaks , a Faculty Researcher at University of Maryland Center for Health Equity ,where I have the pleasure to work with Dr. Stephen B. Thomas, Professor of Health Policy and Management and Director, the University of Maryland Center for Health Equity. I speak in my personal capacity today. I appreciate the opportunity to hear my support for Senate Bill 1056- Cigarettes, Other Tobacco Products, and Electronic Smoking Devices - Revisions (Tobacco Retail Modernization Act of 2024). I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 1056.

According to the CDC (2023), 2.13 million U.S. middle and high school students reported using e-cigarettes in the past 30 days, including 4.6% of middle school students and 10.0% of high school students. E-cigarettes are being marketed to youth and young adults as a less harmful alternative to cigarettes. Although true, e-cigarettes still contain potentially harmful substances, including nicotine, heavy metals like lead, volatile organic compounds, and cancer-causing agents (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2016).

E-Cigarettes contain nicotine , an addictive chemical that can have a significant impact on the development of adolescent's brains and can harm the parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, and impulse control until development ends at age 25(Taylor, 2014). E-cigarettes are a gateway to smoking cigarettes. Obisesan et. al (2019) found that youth e-cigarette and cigarette use have been associated with mental health symptoms such as depression.

I am deeply committed to helping to address the public health challenges of underserved

communities across Maryland and the country, and ensuring these communities have trust in the health care system and public health systems. I believe that updating the standing order to limit sales of tobacco products is an accountable and responsible decision for all Marylanders.

Thank you for your consideration. Again, I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 1056

Sincerely,

Francesca Weeks

Francesca Weeks
Faculty Researcher
Maryland Center for Health Equity
University of Maryland, School of Public Health
Email: fweeks@umd.edu