

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

March 6, 2024

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

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Beidle,

I am writing to you as a parent, living in Riva, to express my support for SB 1056, the Tobacco Retail Modernization Act of 2024. I support this bill because as a parent of teens, I see how readily available vapes and nicotine/tobacco products are to minors. My kids avoid using the restrooms at school (Central Middle School and South River High School) because of the prevalent use of vape products in the restrooms.

Despite progress in tobacco control, the problem of youth access to tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, remains significant. Data indicates that over 48,000 Maryland high school students **self-report** they use tobacco products, a number that likely falls short of the true total. With lower odor than cigarettes and higher concentration of nicotine, vape products are easier for teens to conceal, while also being highly addictive. The marketing strategies and new products like flavored e-cigarettes target and hook kids, Big Tobacco's next generation of customers. What adult is using Peach Breeze vape to quit smoking. The Tobacco industry's claims that vapes help adults quit is a guise to allow them to get the next generation of customers addicted before leaving middle and high school.

The impact of youth tobacco use is both a public health and economic burden. Maryland incurs annual healthcare costs of approximately \$3.14 billion directly related to smoking, and 27.5% cancer-related Maryland deaths can be traced to tobacco use. We must act now to mitigate its influence on the health of our children and our communities at large.

SB 1056 proposes to impose stricter penalties on illegal sales to minors, including increased fines and potential license suspension for violators, restrict access to vapes to licensed dealers, and mandates a study on youth access to tobacco products. It also increases the cost of the tobacco retail license to help fund enforcement activities by our state and county agencies that help protect our communities from bad actors. These steps are crucial for developing effective healthcare and public health strategies to protect Maryland's youth and to ensure that retailers are held accountable to state and federal law.

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 on behalf of our youth,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suzanne Cleary', written in a cursive style.

Suzanne Cleary