

Delegate C.T. Wilson
Economic Matters Committee, Chairman
Lowe House Office Building, Room 231
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

February 20, 2024

RE: HB 1180 - Cigarettes, Other Tobacco Products, and Electronic Smoking Devices -
Revisions (Tobacco Retail Modernization Act of 2024)

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Dear Chairman Wilson,

My name is Flannery Lee, and I am here as a YAP representative, activist, and student living in Baltimore City, expressing my support for HB 1180. I can not stress enough the need for this bill, and I am especially grateful to Chairman Wilson for his leadership in sponsoring this.

As we all know, the problem of youth access to tobacco products remains a significant public health and economic issue. Data indicates that over 48,000 Maryland high school students use tobacco products, a number that likely falls short of the real total. Big Tobacco industries have hooked my friends, my classmates, and even my family by their strategic marketing and flavor components. To set the stage, It's estimated that smoking will prematurely kill 92,00 kids now living in our state. These ESDs impact not only youth development but our economy, Maryland incurs annual healthcare costs of approximately \$3.14 billion directly related to smoking. Keeping these staggering figures in mind, it is of life or death important that Maryland produces a conclusive and multifaceted approach to this crisis.

HB 1180s' proposals take a significant step towards this by limiting manufacture power and sale of ESD to licensed vendors. Controlling ESD purchasing to vape stores will significantly reduce teen access. However, lawmakers need to go even further. While limiting access is important, this bill needs to include provisions to educate youth about the direct correlation of ESD products and what we, as teens, do. We need PSAs and visual advertisements in these vape stores that specifically target what youth care about. We as Gen-Z are a visual generation: we care about sports, skin, and how we look. If these in-person required advertisements target ESD's effects it's much more probable that other teens will develop a well rounded perspective of just how

detrimental these are. Along with more targeted advertisements, I encourage the ATCC and MDH to use the data from the end of year report to thoroughly look at the manufacturer's role in tobacco retail, tackling the root cause of this issue.

Finally, I support raising the licensing fee: the idea that counties will use \$100 from each license to enforce existing preventive laws shows Maryland's commitment to protecting teens from the dangers of vaping. I strongly support earmarking these allotments for these previously mentioned visual advertisements.

I urge you to vote in favor of this bill, the Tobacco Retail Modernization Act of 2024, and am looking forward to the development this bill will take on, as well as the continuation of youth voices in the implementation and editing process.

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

Sincerely,
Flannery Lee
Youth Activism Project