

March 6, 2024

Testimony on SB 1056
Fight Flavored Tobacco in Maryland

Position: Favorable

Nabeehah Azeez supports SB 1056 Tobacco Retail Modernization Act
District 40 Resident & Board Member of Masjid Ul Haqq Baltimore

SB 1056 is legislation that would end the sale of all flavored tobacco products in Maryland, including electronic smoking devices, menthol cigarettes, flavored cigars, and smokeless tobacco. I urge the Finance Committee move forward a bill without amendments, free from the type of regulatory loopholes Big Tobacco has exploited for decades.

Flavored tobacco products lure kids into a life-long struggle with deadly addiction, hooking them on products in flavors like minty menthol, glazed donut, gummy bear, and cotton candy.

For decades, the tobacco industry has targeted Black and Brown communities with their predatory marketing of flavored tobacco products, namely menthol cigarettes. As a result, a staggering 85 percent of all African American smokers smoke menthol cigarettes, resulting in a disproportionate burden of tobacco-related disease and death. African Americans are more likely to die from tobacco-related causes than any other race or ethnic group.

As a community worker in Central West Baltimore, I am shocked by the number of youth (and adults) who still use tobacco products, especially flavored vapes, even though it is common knowledge how deadly tobacco is.

As a person of faith, I feel obligated to support a mission to stop Big Tobacco from targeting Maryland's children and Black and Brown communities.

To protect the health and futures of Maryland's youth, we must end the sale of **all** flavored tobacco products in Maryland. I strongly urge the Maryland legislators in the Finance Committee to support SB 1056

Sincerely,

Nabeehah Azeez

Nabeehah Azeez
40th District Resident & Board Member of Masjid Ul Haqq Baltimore