



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

March 7, 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 Dagmawit Assefa, student/youth advocate, and living in Silver Spring MD, to express my support for SB 1056, the Tobacco Retail Modernization Act of 2024. I am especially grateful to the Chairman of this committee for his leadership in sponsoring the bill.

Despite progress in tobacco control, students still have access to tobacco products. It hurts to witness how easy it is to access tobacco products within my school community. The impact of these substances are very harmful for students as it will be a hindrance to their academic success, mentally and physically.

The impact of tobacco goes beyond the people using them, it affects the people around them as well. Once the majority of students have it (which they do), it's easy for it to be deemed as "cool" and "trendy". Peer pressure is also a factor in the spread of tobacco usage. I know a few people who have been peer pressured into smoking and other unhealthy habits. They all ended up not being able to focus as much as they used to, they were always tired and in a mad mental state overall. In general, tobacco puts us all in an unhealthy atmosphere which can hinder our learning and doing basic tasks.

The need for such legislation is broadly recognized, with eighty-one percent of Maryland voters supporting action against Big Tobacco to safeguard. 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 with me.

Sincerely,  
Dagmawit Assefa  
Youth Activism Project