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**Written Testimony from the AFT-Maryland
SB 3– Electronic Smoking Devices, Other Tobacco Products, and Cigarettes –
Taxation and Regulation
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
January 29, 2020**

SUPPORT

Good afternoon Mr. Chair and members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee. On behalf of the 20,000 state, municipal, and public education workers residing in Maryland, AFT-Maryland enthusiastically calls for a favorable report for SB 3, the bill that would more fairly tax electronic cigarettes and other tobacco products.

As the statewide organization for the Baltimore Teachers Union, as well as unions representing thousands of state employees, AFT-Maryland supports bills that modernize and bring our tax code to meet the realities of an economy and market that is rapidly changing thanks to new technologies and products. Senate Bill 3 is an attempt to modernize our state's tax code with respect to the relatively new market of electronic cigarettes, making sure they are taxed just as any other tobacco product.

Members of the committee: As I am sure you all are aware, the scientific community has expressed concerns regarding the safety of electronic tobacco product. Just this last summer, a number of serious illnesses and deaths were linked to these electronic products. The assumption that these products are safer than traditional tobacco products has not yet been verified by the scientific community or the federal government. As such, there is no reason why the state should tax these products at a lower rate than traditional tobacco products.

It is for these reasons that we ask that this committee give a favorable report to SB 3, Electronic Smoking Devices, Other Tobacco Products, and Cigarettes - Taxation and Regulation.