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Testimony for HB3, Business Regulation - Flavored Tobacco Products - Prohibition  
Economic Matters Committee, Thursday Feb 6th, 2020

## **POSITION: FAVORABLE**

Youth tobacco use has skyrocketed in Maryland in recent years, thanks in large part to the rise of e-cigarettes. As a school nurse, I see firsthand the detrimental effects of tobacco use among students. Students are presenting with breathing difficulty that presents like an asthma-like reaction, but the students have no history of asthma--they vape. There are some cases where the students recognize feeling poorly and are stating they wish to quit and can't seem to give up the e-cigarettes. This is most likely due to the addictive nature of the nicotine and the high quantities of it in the e-cigarette cartridges.

Young people are especially vulnerable to nicotine addiction, and nicotine use in adolescents can harm brain development, increase the likelihood of future addiction to other drugs and affect mood, attention, and impulse control.[1] According to the Food and Drug Administration, 70% of youth e-cigarette users say they use the products because they come in appealing flavors. [2]

Although e-cigarettes are the most prominent tobacco product among high schoolers in Maryland, the use of other tobacco products among young people remains a problem. Menthol flavored cigarettes continue to attract young users because menthol flavoring lessens the harshness of smoking cigarettes, which makes it easier for young people to start. Tobacco companies also target communities of color with their menthol products--7 out of 10 African American youth smokers use menthol cigarettes.[3]

81% of youth who have ever used tobacco started with a flavored product [4]. I am seeing a high trend of the fruit flavors, especially mango and pineapple, with several students also using vanilla and mint flavoring. Some students don't recognize the product as a drug due to the flavoring.

A new generation of kids is getting hooked on tobacco. **It is imperative that Maryland lawmakers take action now to protect youth from tobacco addiction by taking flavored e-cigarettes, menthol cigarettes, flavored cigars, and all other flavored tobacco products off the market. I recommend a favorable report for HB 3.**

[1] Office of the Surgeon General, *Know the Risks: E-cigarettes and Young People*, accessed 2 January 2020; HHS, "E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General". Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2016.

[2] FDA, *Guidance for Industry: Modifications to Compliance Policy for Certain Deemed Tobacco Products*, 14 March 2019.

[3] Villanti AC, Mowery PD, Delnevo CD, Niaura RS, Abrams DB, Giovino GA. Changes in the prevalence and correlates of menthol cigarette use in the USA, 2004-2014.

[4] Ambrose, BK, et al., "Flavored Tobacco Product Use Among US Youth Aged 12-17 Years, 2013-2014," *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, published online 26 October 2015.