



February 4, 2020

Dear Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

I'm writing today to express my sincere concern about HB3/SB233 entitled "Business Regulation - Flavored Tobacco Products – Prohibition." I maintain a number of personal and professional reasons for opposing a full-on flavor ban.

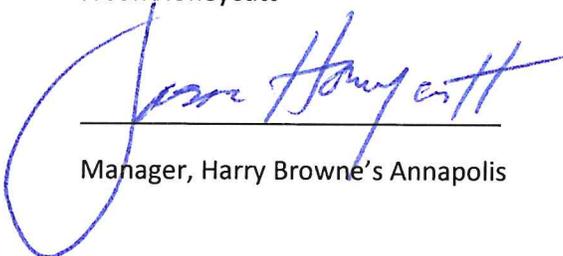
Maryland has previously taken several preventative measures to deter cigarette smoking, such as raising the tax on cigarettes and investing in cessation training. Additionally, the legal age to purchase cigarettes was raised to 21 last year, a measure I fully support for the health of Maryland's children.

Flavor bans on tobacco products limit the options of those who chose to use such products. It limits personal preference with no basis on which to ban certain flavors. This legislation is not an absolute ban on tobacco but rather picking certain types of products as if those products and additives are more detrimental to one's health – which they are not.

From an economic standpoint, as someone in the hospitality industry, revenues to those that sell flavored tobacco products will take a substantial hit. If Maryland acts alone, we will see the rise of a black market from states like Virginia that will export inexpensive flavored products without the regulation and public safety protections, such as demanding identification for underage smokers. Additionally, as a Maryland taxpayer, I am concerned about the loss of revenue to the State as well as the blow dealt to small business owners who sell such products.

I believe a flavor ban on tobacco products is in fact short sighted and fully needs to be evaluated for the potential of unintended consequences. I appreciate the opportunity to add my thoughts to this debate. If you have any questions regarding my letter, please feel free to contact me.

Jason Honeycutt



Manager, Harry Browne's Annapolis