

Letter of Information from Maryland Tobacco Free Coalition

SB 410—Information

Dear Chair Kelley, Vice Chair Feldman and Members of the Finance Committee:

The Maryland Tobacco Free Coalition Submits the below statement for information in response to SB 410:

We are grateful to the sponsors for supporting action to address the role flavors play in hooking kids on tobacco products; however, we are concerned that this bill does not comprehensively address all tobacco products that contain flavors.

In Maryland, we are currently facing an epidemic of youth tobacco use. Youth are using products such as electronic smoking devices (ESDs), cigarettes, cigars and chewing tobacco¹. The flavorings in all of these products are appealing to youth and are the reason many initiate use².

When addressing this issue, it is important to remember the variety of products on the market and not only look at ESDs. The tobacco industry continues to create and market new products to hook Maryland's children. They need new smokers to support their business model. By addicting the next generation to tobacco, they are creating more of a tax burden on Marylanders with the increase in cost for Medicaid as well as the human cost of lives lost each year³. If nothing changes, 92,000 kids alive today in Maryland will die prematurely due to tobacco use⁴.

As you address the predatory practices of the industry, we remind the committee of all of the many products that industry targets at youth. Particularly, the industry's long history of targeting communities of color with menthol cigarettes⁵. In not addressing all products, the legislation leaves many communities to still be targeted by the industry with fruity and minty tobacco products.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information on SB 410.

Sincerely,

American Heart Association

American Lung Association

Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids

MD PIRG

PAVe

¹ <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/maryland>

² https://www.globaltobaccocontrol.org/sites/default/files/state_of_the_evidence_-_flavor_ban_or_restriction_0.pdf

³ <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/maryland>

⁴ <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/maryland>

⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/disparities/african-americans/index.htm>