



# The Temple Hills Coalition of Pastors TTHCOP

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## Testimony on SB 177 / HB 134 *Fight Flavored Tobacco in Maryland*

### Position: Favorable

The Temple Hills Coalition of Pastors supports SB 177/HB 134.

SB 177/HB 134 is legislation that would end the sale of all flavored tobacco products in Maryland, including electronic smoking devices, menthol cigarettes, flavored cigars, and smokeless tobacco. We urge passage of a bill without amendments, free from the type of regulatory loopholes Big Tobacco has exploited for decades.

Flavored tobacco products lure kids into a life-long struggle with deadly addiction, hooking them on products in flavors like minty menthol, glazed donut, gummy bear, and cotton candy.

For decades, the tobacco industry has targeted Black and Brown communities with their predatory marketing of flavored tobacco products, namely menthol cigarettes. As a result, a staggering 85 percent of all African American smokers smoke menthol cigarettes, resulting in a disproportionate burden of tobacco-related disease and death. African Americans are more likely to die from tobacco-related causes than any other race or ethnic group.

The Faith & Community Against Flavored Tobacco coalition's mission is to stop Big Tobacco from targeting Maryland's children and Black and Brown communities.

To protect the health and futures of Maryland's youth, we must end the sale of **all** flavored tobacco products in Maryland. Urge Maryland legislators to vote yes on SB 177 and HB 134.

Sincerely,



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Pastor Rodney Ruffin, Elim Baptist Church

Pastor Charles Whitaker, River of Life Church

Pastor Timothy Proctor, Prayer and Praise Ministries

Pastor Akisha S. Jefferson, First Sunday's

Pastor Charles Bynum II, Cornerstone Baptist Community Church

Pastor LaReese M. Brooks, Truth, Righteous and Love (TRL) Ministry

Pastor Frankey D. Grayton, Southern Friendship Baptist Church

Bishop Robert White, New Hope Baptist Church

Pastor Wallis Baxter III, Second Baptist Church Southwest

Pastor Corey Thompson, City of Joy Baptist Church

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## **Partners of TTHCOP**

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Pastor Nathaniel Thomas, Forestville New Redeemer Baptist Church