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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

House Bill 134 – Business Regulation – Flavored Tobacco Products – Prohibition

Economic Matters Committee

Health and Government Operations Committee

February 10, 2021

SUPPORT

Background: House Bill 134 (HB134) would prohibit licensed tobacco retailers from selling flavored tobacco or flavored electronic cigarette products in Maryland.

Written Comments: There is no question that the use of tobacco products is detrimental to health. Therefore, we should not be enticing people, especially young people, to use these deadly products with familiar flavors such as mint, candy, and fruit. Studies show that menthol flavored cigarettes are used disproportionately by young people and minority populations. Flavored tobacco products should not be allowed to act as a gateway to long term tobacco use and addiction. Often, electronic cigarettes or vaping, are seen as safer alternatives to cigarettes, which could not be further from the truth. These products, which are also flavored and heavily marketed towards young people, have been linked to severe lung infections and dozens of deaths. Flavored vape oils contain chemicals, metals, and fine particles such as nickel, tin, lead, and diacetyl.

Similar bans on flavored tobacco or vaping products have been passed in Massachusetts and New Jersey. A limited federal ban was also enacted last year, which only applies to certain electronic cigarette flavors. It is time for Maryland to set an example for the rest of the nation, and make sure we are not allowing our young people to damage their bodies early in life and become addicted to these deadly products.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, which serves as the legislative affairs arm of the The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore is a member organization of the Faith and Community Against Flavored Tobacco coalition. We join nearly 100 other local, statewide and national organizations representing a diverse group communities and faiths to call for a healthier Maryland free of flavored tobacco products. With this in mind, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report of HB 134.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

BALTIMORE JEWISH COUNCIL

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Member of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs

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