

Dated: February 6, 2021

Written testimony to oppose Menthol and Flavor Ban Bill (HB 134)

I, Amit Sood, am writing this testimony to ensure all statements in this testimony are true. I own GT's Handimart in Maryland, which sells menthol cigarettes, flavored cigars, and flavored chewing tobacco. If this ban goes in effect, I will lose 75%-80% of sales adding up to those categories. If this ban goes through, I will lose \$300,000 in revenue per year.

I employ 18 people in my store. If I lose sales revenue it would force me to lay off 5 to 7 employees who are solely dependent on this job, the amount of stress and financial troubles these employees will suffer is beyond comprehension. Who's going to take care of them, and their families.? Who's going to put food on the table for them??

My tobacco customers not only buy tobacco products at my store, they buy other non tobacco products, like pump gas at my store, buy chips, sodas and lottery tickets. My store is next to the Pennsylvania border, that has no ban on any of these tobacco products. My customers will go there buy their tobacco products that they prefer, and buy other non tobacco products while there. Due to this, I'm going to lose a lot more revenue that isn't connected with tobacco products.

Ban of any product in one state means gain of business in another state. I'm sure you have heard what happened in the State of Massachusetts. Just because there is a ban it would not make people stop using the product but drive them to neighboring states to purchase the same product causing local Maryland retailers to lose money.

There's another issue, this will lead to illegal activity as well. Criminals will find ways to bring these banned products from out of state, and sell them here illegally. That puts more pressure on law enforcement to catch these criminals.

Worst Case Scenario...Loss in revenue means loss in profit which will ruin my finances, and I'll most likely have to shut down my business, and lay off all my 18 employees.

Once Again, please rethink what your Bill HB 134 if enacted will do to my business, and to the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,

Amit Sood

Owner of GT's Handimart