

January 26, 2021

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

Position: Favorable

Candice Willie 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.

I currently sit on the board of the Muslim Community Cultural Center of Baltimore. I am also a brand new small business owner. Most importantly, I am expecting to give birth to my very first child in March. As a muslim woman I don't think people should use products that cause the type of harm and devastation that tobacco products cause; but, I understand that individuals have the free will to do as they choose. As a mother, I plan to teach my child about the dangers of tobacco products and I hope that when my daughter goes out into the world she is not tempted by tobacco products with candy-like flavors. Our children are our world's most valuable asset and we should be promoting them to engage in positive things. We should not be distracting them with cherry and chocolate flavored products that can harm them and, through second-hand smoke, harm others. For decades, the tobacco industry has targeted Black and Brown communities with their predatory marketing of flavored tobacco products and I do not want my daughter to be among their next target audience.

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. I Urge Maryland legislators to vote yes on SB 177 and HB 134.

Sincerely,

Candice Willie

Candice Willie,

Expectant Mother, Business Owner, Woman of Faith