



Senate Finance Committee

February 16, 2023

Senate Bill 259

Business Regulation - Flavored Tobacco Products - Prohibition

Support

NCADD-Maryland supports support Senate Bill 259. Just like other drugs, nicotine is an addictive substance complete with cravings and withdrawal symptoms when a person tries to quit. The research is clear that the younger a person starts using any substance, including nicotine or tobacco, the greater the chances that a person will develop an addiction. Since flavored products are targeted to youth, they are especially dangerous.

There are over 15,000 flavors of tobacco and nicotine products, including cotton candy, gummy bear, mango, mint, and menthol. 80% of youth who have ever used tobacco started with a flavored product.¹ According to the FDA, 70% of youth electronic smoking device users say these use electronic smoking devices because they come in appealing flavors.² Additionally, the 2019 National Youth Tobacco Survey, mint and menthol flavored e-cigarettes were the second most popular flavor category among high school users.³

The tobacco industry has targeted the marketing of these products to youth—especially among communities of color and LGBTQ youth—hoping to create lifetime of dependence. Menthol in particular, is a flavor proven to be especially addictive and hard to quit. Allowing menthol flavored products to stay on store shelves disproportionately, negatively impacts communities of color, LGBT communities and lower socioeconomic communities and leads to higher unequal burden of disease and death.

For these reasons, we ask for a favorable report on SB 259.

¹ Ambrose, BK, et al., “Flavored Tobacco Product Use Among US Youth Aged 12-17 Years, 2013-2014,” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, published online 26 October 2015.

² FDA, Guidance for Industry: Modifications to Compliance Policy for Certain Deemed Tobacco Products, 14 March 2019.

³ Cullen KA, Gentzke AS, Sawdey MD, et al. e-Cigarette Use Among Youth in the United States, 2019. *JAMA*. 2019;322(21):2095–2103. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2019.18387>