



February 16, 2024

Testimony of Laura Hale

American Heart Association

**Support HB 1180 Cigarettes, Other Tobacco Products, and Electronic Smoking Devices - Revisions  
(Tobacco Retail Modernization Act of 2024)**

Dear Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby and Honorable Members of the Economic Matters Committee,

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important legislation for heart health. My name is Laura Hale and I am the Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association. The American Heart Association extends its support House Bill 1180 – Tobacco Retail Modernization Act of 2024 including the technical amendments offered by the sponsor.

We applaud Chair Wilson for putting in this strong piece of tobacco control legislation that makes sense for health and for business.

Strong retail licensure requirements are a proven way to prevent and limit youth use of tobacco products<sup>1</sup>. By increasing the cost to attain a license, the state can use these funds for better enforcement of tobacco control laws and will have funding to be process the paperwork. The current fee is so low, it doesn't account for the needs of the government to process the license and to do enforcement required for both state and federal compliance. Increasing these fees are essential in the business of running the state and will better equip the state and local health departments to do enforcement checks. Maintaining these checks are essential and are also tied into federal compliance under the SYNAR program. SYNAR provides block grants to the state of Maryland that we can (and have in the past) lose for lack of compliance for selling to people under 21.

One in 10 middle and high school students under 18 report obtaining e-cigarettes at a gas station or convenience store<sup>2</sup>. By addressing where these items are sold we can also address increased use of these deadly products.

Places with stronger retail licensure requirements have lower rates of cigarette and e-cigarette use and initiation among both youth and young adults<sup>3</sup>. This bill strengthens the retail licensure

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<sup>1</sup> Astor, R.L., Urman, R., Barrington-Trimis, J.L., Berhane, K., Steinberg, J., Cousineau, M., Leventhal, A.M., Unger, J.B., Cruz, T., Pentz, M., Samet, J.M., & McConnell, R. (2019). Tobacco Retail Licensing and Youth Product Use. *Pediatrics*, 143 (2), Article e20173536. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2017-3536>

<sup>2</sup> Liu, S. T., Snyder, K., Tynan, M. A., & Wang, T. W. (2019). Youth Access to Tobacco Products in the United States, 2016-2018. *Tobacco Regulatory Science*, 5(6), 491–501. <https://doi.org/10.18001/TRS.5.6.2>

<sup>3</sup> Source: Astor, R.L., Urman, R., Barrington-Trimis, J.L., Berhane, K., Steinberg, J., Cousineau, M., Leventhal, A.M., Unger, J.B., Cruz, T., Pentz, M., Samet, J.M., & McConnell, R. (2019). Tobacco Retail Licensing and Youth Product Use. *Pediatrics*, 143 (2), Article e20173536. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2017-3536>

requirements in the state in proven effective ways that are key for tobacco control and are good business practices for the state.

The American Heart Association urges a favorable report on this legislation.