

Written Testimony in support of House Bill 238
Public Health – Clean Indoor Air Act – Revisions
Before the Economic Matters Committee: February 20, 2024

The Tobacco Control Resource Center (TCRC) supports House Bill 238 – Public Health – Clean Indoor Air Act – Revisions. TCRC works with community partners, state agencies, healthcare providers, and local health departments to implement strategies to protect Marylanders from tobacco-related death and disease. Specifically, TCRC aims to link professionals and providers to state tobacco control initiatives, provide evidence-based resources, support a collaborative network of tobacco prevention and cessation professionals and provide a forum for sharing best practices.

This bill would prohibit vaping tobacco or cannabis products in spaces where smoking is currently prohibited by the Clean Indoor Air Act, including indoor workplaces and public places and on public transportation. Specifically, it prohibits vaping in indoor areas open to the public and where meetings are open to the public, indoor places of employment, and government owned or operated public transportation. It also requires that signs stating “No smoking or vaping” be noticeably posted and maintained in every indoor area and at each public entrance to places open to the public where smoking or vaping would be prohibited. Similarly, the bill requires that signs stating, “Smoking or vaping permitted in this room,” are noticeably posted and maintained where smoking and vaping are allowed.

Exposure to tobacco and nicotine products increases the difficulty of cessation from smoking.

Quitting smoking is extremely difficult. According to a 2018 study by the CDC, 55.1% of adult smokers said they attempted to quit smoking in the past year but only 7.5% of adult smokers successfully quit smoking in the past year.¹ A CDC study from 2023 conducted on youth tobacco users showed that approximately 10% (2.80 million) of adolescents had used a tobacco product within the past month; among middle and high school students, e-cigarettes were the most used tobacco product 7.7% (2.13 million).²

Exposure to tobacco and nicotine products in daily life not only normalizes tobacco use, but it also risks renormalizing using tobacco products in smoke-free indoor environments. For instance, people could start thinking that the laws that prevent indoor smoking are unnecessary, seeing as allowing indoor vaping creates similarly unhealthy environments.

Tobacco users support creating smoke-free areas.

Finally, many smokers support smoke-free areas, as having smoke-free areas incentivizes them to quit and helps them stay smokefree.³ Therefore, preventing vaping in indoor areas would incentivize users to live vape-free. By broadening smoke-free areas to include vaping, House Bill

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/cessation/smoking-cessation-fast-facts/index.html.

² https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/mm7244a1.htm?s_cid=mm7244a1_w

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5487972/pdf/BLT.16.186536.pdf>.

238 helps ease the burden of cessation on users by limiting the areas they would be allowed to vape.

Conclusion

While quitting tobacco use is difficult, it has extremely positive personal and public health benefits. TCRC urges the General Assembly to pass House Bill 238, as the bill eases the challenge of quitting tobacco product use by broadening the scope of the Clean Indoor Air Act to prevent indoor vaping.