

Subject: Protecting Our Children's Future – Support HB 1241

Dear Chairman Wilson,

As a **Muslim mother of two children—a toddler and a pre-teen—living in Baltimore City**, I am writing to express my strong support for HB 1241. As a parent, I am deeply concerned about the increasing availability and appeal of e-cigarettes to young people, and I support this bill because I want to ensure that my children grow up in a healthier, safer environment.

I am grateful for your leadership, as well as that of Delegate Amprey and Chairwoman Beidle, in sponsoring legislation that protects Maryland's youth from the dangers of tobacco products.

Raising children in Baltimore City presents unique challenges. In our communities, e-cigarettes and flavored tobacco products are heavily marketed, often placed in stores right at a child's eye level. I have seen firsthand how these products are designed to be attractive to young people—packaged in bright colors, advertised with sweet flavors, and falsely marketed as “harmless.” My pre-teen is already being exposed to peer pressure around vaping, and as a mother, I fear the long-term consequences if stronger measures aren't taken.

The statistics are alarming—**over 48,000 Maryland high school students** report using tobacco products, and that number is likely even higher. Meanwhile, Maryland incurs **\$3.14 billion annually** in healthcare costs due to smoking-related illnesses, and **27.5% of cancer-related deaths** in our state are linked to tobacco use. If we do not take action now, future generations, including my own children, will bear the consequences.

HB 1241 is a crucial step in preventing this. By giving the **Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission** the same enforcement power over e-cigarettes that it already has for traditional tobacco products, this bill will help limit youth access and hold businesses accountable. It will also require proper record-keeping for e-cigarette sales, ensuring that retailers comply with regulations meant to protect our children.

As a Muslim, my faith teaches me the importance of protecting our youth and preserving their health. Islam emphasizes personal responsibility and avoiding harmful substances. Allowing Big Tobacco to continue targeting our children with addictive products contradicts these values. It is our duty as parents, community members, and policymakers to act.

With **81% of Maryland voters** in support of stronger action against Big Tobacco, I urge you to vote in favor of HB 1241. This bill is not just about policy—it is about **protecting our children's future**.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Maryland's families.

Sincerely,

Aishah Rashid

Baltimore City Resident & Concerned Mother