

Muslim Community Cultural Center of Baltimore

Our Community... Our Responsibility!

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Delegate C.T. Wilson

Economic Matters Committee, Chairman

Lowe House Office Building, Room 231

6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

February 21, 2025

Re: Testimony on HB 1241 (SB 0842) - *Other Tobacco Products and Electronic Smoking Devices- Seizure and Wholesaler Licensure Requirements*

Position: Favorable - A Moral Responsibility to Protect Our Youth – Support HB 1241

Dear Chairman Wilson,

I am writing as an Imam and an Islamic and general community leader in Baltimore City, to express my strong support for HB 1241. In my role, I counsel families and young people who struggle with the consequences of tobacco addiction. This bill is a necessary step in protecting the health and well-being of our children.

I commend you, Delegate Amprey, and Chairwoman Beidle for your commitment to protecting our youth from the harms of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes.

The rise of youth vaping is a crisis that cannot be ignored. The statistics are staggering—**over 48,000 high school students** in Maryland use tobacco products, and this number is likely an undercount. E-cigarette companies aggressively market their products to young people, increasing the risk of lifelong addiction.

As a faith leader, I see the moral imperative to protect our children from harmful substances. Tobacco-related illnesses cost Maryland **\$3.14 billion annually** in healthcare expenses and contribute to **27.5% of cancer-related deaths**. We must act decisively to prevent further harm.

HB 1241 strengthens enforcement against illegal e-cigarette sales and ensures that these products are regulated like other tobacco products. This legislation is a necessary step toward protecting the future of our youth.

With **81% of Maryland voters** supporting stronger regulations on tobacco products, it is clear that our communities demand action. I urge you to vote in favor of HB 1241.

Thank you for your leadership in protecting our children.

Sincerely,

E. El-Amin

Imam Earl El-Amin

Muslim Community Cultural Center of Baltimore