

Robert Miss Jr.

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Subject: Opposition to SB 0918 – Concerns Regarding Unfair Market Advantage & Public Impact

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 0918, which I believe poses significant risks to small businesses, consumer choice, and public health in Maryland. This bill, while seemingly designed to regulate vapor products, ultimately benefits Big Tobacco and threatens small businesses and consumers who rely on open vapor systems as a reduced-harm alternative to smoking.

My concerns with SB 0918 include the following:

1. **Unfair Favoritism Toward Big Tobacco:** The bill is being lobbied under the guise of consumer protection but primarily benefits large tobacco companies, creating an uneven playing field that drives out small businesses.
2. **Excessive Authority Given to the Attorney General:** This legislation would grant the Maryland Attorney General sole authority to determine which vapor products can be sold in the state. However, the bill lacks clear guidelines or a transparent process for how these decisions will be made. This raises serious concerns about fairness, consistency, and the potential for arbitrary exclusions of products.
3. **Unattainable Fees for Small Businesses:** The fees associated with this legislation will be prohibitive for small, independent vape shops, effectively ensuring that only Big Tobacco can afford to stay on the market. This could lead to the closure of many Maryland-based vape retailers, eliminating jobs and reducing tax revenue for the state.
4. **Elimination of Low-Nicotine Vapor Options:** The bill poses a significant risk of banning open vapor systems, which allow consumers to use lower nicotine levels (such as 3 mg or lower). If these options are removed, consumers will be left with only high-nicotine alternatives (such as 50 mg and above), which is counterproductive for harm reduction and could push former smokers back to combustible tobacco products.
5. **Economic Consequences & Unregulated Black Market Risk:** Data indicates that small vape businesses are not the primary sellers of vape products to underage individuals. Instead, larger convenience stores are responsible for the majority of underage sales. By forcing small vape shops out of business, SB 0918 would not

only cause economic losses for Maryland but also create a dangerous, unregulated black market where consumers will turn to obtain the products they need. This would undermine public safety and make it harder to ensure proper age restrictions and product quality controls.

I urge you to reconsider the impact of SB 0918 and oppose this legislation in its current form. Instead of granting unchecked power to the Attorney General and favoring Big Tobacco, Maryland should focus on fair, clear, and balanced regulations that protect small businesses, consumers, and public health.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this matter further and provide additional insights into how this bill will negatively impact our community.

Sincerely,

Robert Miss Jr.

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