

**Testimony Opposing SB 279**

**Submitted by \_\_\_\_\_**

**On Behalf of George J Falter Wholesale**

**Date: February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

To the Members of the Maryland Senate Finance Committee,

My Name is Chris Warthen, I am the Assistant Operations Manager for The George J Falter Company located @3501 Benson Avenue Baltimore Md 21227. We are the oldest Candy distributor in Maryland who also carries a full line of convenience store items. We were founded in Baltimore City in 1878, and the same Falter family still owns and operates the company today.

I am writing this testimony on behalf of George J Falter Company. Today, we are **opposing Senate Bill 279**, which proposes a preemption repeal for Baltimore city.

If the goal of this bill is to curb the growth of illicit vape and smoke shops in Baltimore, there are far more effective ways to achieve that without placing additional burdens on law-abiding retailers. Repealing preemption is unnecessary for the city to address this issue, especially when it could be handled through more targeted, constructive solutions.

Wholesalers like us rely on standardized regulations and rules to function effectively, and local variation disrupts that. Preemption provides uniformity across jurisdictions and prevents cities from creating their own regulations. If it were to be repealed, compliance would become fragmented, creating higher costs, operational chaos, and place the burden on compliant retailers and wholesale companies like ours. Furthermore, SB279 is not clear as to what they are trying to enforce. What will they think next that could potentially put us out of business. No bill should pass allowing anyone to have the power to randomly come up with new laws on any given day without needing pass to in the legislative process.

It is for these reasons that we urge the committee to **REJECT SB 279**

Sincerely,

Christopher Warthen

The George J. Falter Company