



Dear Chairman Mendelson and Members of the DC Council:

The undersigned organizations support legislation to end the sale of flavored e-cigarettes in the District of Columbia. However, we urge you to include all flavored tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes and fruit and candy flavored cigars. For decades, these products have also been attracting and addicting children and causing preventable death and disease – especially in communities of color. Passage of such comprehensive legislation would be a tremendous victory for DC’s kids and will protect them from nicotine addiction and other health risks associated with the use of e-cigarettes and other tobacco products.

E-cigarette use soared by 135 percent among high school students nationwide from 2017 to 2019. Five million middle and high school students use e-cigarettes – an increase of nearly 1.5 million over the previous year. The evidence is clear that flavored e-cigarettes have fueled this epidemic – 97 percent of youth e-cigarette users report using a flavored product in the past month and 70 percent cite flavors as the reason for their use. In addition, the recent spate of serious lung illnesses linked to e-cigarette use being reported across the country underscores the urgency of acting now to protect our kids and the health of all DC residents.

The time is now to end the youth e-cigarette epidemic by prohibiting the sale of flavored e-cigarettes. We must also address a long-standing public health crisis in the District by prohibiting the sale of menthol cigarettes and other flavored products such as flavored cigars. The use of these flavored products has long disproportionately impacted DC’s African American communities. Removing these products from the market will reduce smoking and save lives. We urge you to make sure no communities are left behind.

All of these flavored products are undermining efforts to reduce youth tobacco use and putting a new generation of kids at risk of nicotine addiction and the serious health harms that result from tobacco use.

The District has always been a national leader in passing and implementing impactful, effective policies proven to prevent and reduce tobacco use. We urge you to continue that national leadership by amending and passing legislation to end the sale of all flavored tobacco products at all retailers in the District without exceptions.

Sincerely,

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
Parents Against Vaping E-Cigarettes