

Communication from Public

Name: Breathe Southern California
Date Submitted: 10/13/2021 12:24 PM
Council File No: 18-1104
Comments for Public Posting: Please find attached a letter regarding the flavored tobacco ordinance being considered by the L.A. City Council. Our letter respectfully requests Councilmember Lee set a hearing date soon regarding the flavored tobacco ordinance, and we respectfully request a meeting with Councilmember Lee to discuss the potential amendments that may be considered in committee.



BreatheSoCal.org

5858 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90036
P: (323) 935-8050
F: (323) 935-1873

October 12, 2021

The Honorable John Lee
200 N. Spring St., Room 405
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilmember Lee,

Breathe Southern California writes to strongly encourage you to strengthen the draft ordinance that would end the sale of flavored tobacco products in the City of Los Angeles, including e-cigarettes and menthol-flavored products, and set a hearing date within the next six weeks in your committee to consider the item. Additionally, we respectfully request a meeting with you and your staff to discuss the potential amendments that may be considered by the committee.

Breathe Southern California is a nonprofit organization that promotes clean air and healthy lungs through research, education, advocacy, and technology. For over 50 years, we have been a leader in lung health improvement efforts in California.

The proposed ordinance will save lives and improve health outcomes. Removing flavored tobacco products removes the lure that has seen an epidemic increase in teen and youth usage of tobacco products. However, exemption for flavored shisha products ignores a clear threat to young adults and teens and weakens the overall effort. It is imperative for public health reasons that the ordinance be more comprehensive and remove the exemptions for flavored hookah.

Tobacco products, including flavored products, contain nicotine, which is a highly addictive chemical that can cause long-term damage to the adolescent brain. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, in a typical hour-long period of hookah smoking, users may inhale 100–200 times the amount of smoke they would inhale from a single cigarette and are exposed to 1.7 times more nicotine than the typical cigarette. Per the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, tobacco use causes nearly a third of all cancer deaths in California.

Standing up to Big Tobacco and protecting all Angelenos' health is as important as ever. We hope to hear back from you soon regarding a hearing date for the flavored tobacco ordinance and a meeting with you and your staff prior to the ordinance being heard in committee. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me at RDhillon@breathesocal.org or at (323) 935-8050 x233. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Raj Dhillon".

Raj Dhillon
Senior Manager, Advocacy & Public Policy

Communication from Public

Name: American Heart Association
Date Submitted: 10/13/2021 12:31 PM
Council File No: 18-1104
Comments for Public Posting: Attached is our letter of support for the LA City flavors ordinance.

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Los Angeles Division

816 S Figueroa St., Los Angeles, CA 90017
www.heart.org

October 5, 2021

Mayor and City Council Members
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mayor Garcetti and Los Angeles City Council:

The American Heart Association is encouraged by Los Angeles City's efforts to limit the sale of flavored tobacco products. The tobacco industry is actively and aggressively working to addict new young people with flavored tobacco products. As a result, we urge you to establish a comprehensive flavored tobacco ordinance prohibiting the sale of all flavored tobacco products in the City of Los Angeles without exemptions.

Ending the sale of all flavored tobacco products will reduce access to the products that are the tobacco industry's key strategy for targeting and addicting new smokers, particularly Black and Brown youth. They know that flavors like grape, mint, menthol, cotton candy, bubble gum and gummy bears mask the harsh taste of tobacco and are highly appealing to youth.

Similar to other flavored tobacco products, flavored hookah tobacco contains nicotine and other harmful toxins. In California, hookah is most commonly used by 18- to 24-year-old college students, with one quarter of them citing hookah as their introduction to nicotine products. Even among high school students, nine percent report ever using hookah. This is especially concerning as young people who use hookah tobacco are twice as likely to begin a cigarette habit.

Ending the sale of all flavored tobacco products without exemptions will help protect our youth from tobacco addiction and is crucial to preventing future tobacco-related death and disease. The American Heart Association respectfully asks for your support of this vital health policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Craig".

Paul Craig
Board Chairman
Los Angeles Division, American Heart Association

Communication from Public

Name: Americans for Non Smokers Rights

Date Submitted: 10/13/2021 12:34 PM

Council File No: 18-1104

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Mayor Garcetti and City of Los Angeles Councilmembers, Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights is a member of L.A. Families Fighting Flavored Tobacco, and we strongly urge you to end the sale of flavored tobacco with no exemptions for menthol or hookah.



AMERICANS FOR NONSMOKERS' RIGHTS

October 8, 2021

The Honorable Eric Garcetti, Mayor of Los Angeles
Members of the Los Angeles City Council
Los Angeles City Hall
200 North Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mayor Garcetti and City of Los Angeles Councilmembers,

Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights is a member of L.A. Families Fighting Flavored Tobacco, and **we strongly urge you to end the sale of flavored tobacco with no exemptions for menthol or hookah.**

Los Angeles should join more than 60 cities and counties in California that have ended the sale of all flavored tobacco products—including menthol cigarettes, flavored electronic smoking devices, and shisha/hookah—in all retailers without exemption.

The purpose of these laws is to reduce access to the products that are enticing young people to start on a lifetime of nicotine addiction. Taking this action will limit the negative public health consequences of tobacco use and to reduce the impact of targeted tobacco industry marketing, especially to youth and low-income communities of color.

We strongly oppose the current exemption for flavored shisha/hookah and urge you to amend the proposal to prohibit the sale of these products. All flavored tobacco products should be **treated equally** by the ordinance. It's very problematic to single out hookah tobacco as the one type of flavored product that may still be sold, especially when we know that the social aspects of using this flavored, combustible product is a significant draw for youth and young adults to start using tobacco.

The tobacco industry has a long history of targeting communities in order to hook people into addiction and keep up their profits. The industry has targeted flavored tobacco products to many groups – including promoting menthol cigarettes to African Americans and the LGBTQ+ community, flavored vaping products to youth and young adults, and flavored hookah/shisha to college students and Middle-Eastern communities.

In attempts to fend off regulation, the hookah industry often argues that hookah is a cultural practice unique to Middle-Eastern, Indian, and other cultures that should be respected and treated differently than other tobacco products. However, As Dr. Wael Al-Delaimy, Associate Director of the Institute for Public Health at UCSD has said, "It can't be people who are selling these products that speak for the culture." Likewise, hookah use is not limited to Middle-Eastern cultures. In California, 40% of hookah users are Hispanic/Latino, and 9.2% of California high school students have reported using hookah.

The Biden Administration announced its intention to end the sale of menthol tobacco products, and Californians will vote in November 2022 on whether to uphold the state's law ending the sale of flavored tobacco products. These actions are welcome news, but the reality is that FDA regulations take many years to come to fruition, and we can expect federal regulations to face years of delay due to interference and legal action by tobacco companies. Likewise, the statewide vote remains over a year away.

It's imperative for communities to not wait for these proposed actions to take effect. Instead, Los Angeles should take swift local action that can have an immediate benefit to the health of community members.

Likewise, given the respiratory risks associated with COVID-19 and the health disparities that this pandemic has revealed, it is important to reduce all risks to lung health. Research indicates that people who use tobacco products and get COVID-19 are more susceptible to severe respiratory symptoms and outcomes.

COVID-19 doesn't discriminate, but people of color and low-income families are bearing the brunt of this disease, and these are the same populations that Big Tobacco continues targeting with flavored products.

It's never been a better time to put the health of our communities above tobacco industry profits.

We join in the L.A. Families Fighting Flavored Tobacco coalition in urging you to move swiftly and schedule a hearing of the ordinance at a regular meeting in October.

Thank you for your leadership and desire to make Los Angeles the best place to live, work, and visit. Please feel free to contact me at 510-841-3045 if you have any questions, comments, or feedback.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Hallett, MPH
President and CEO

Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights is a national, member-based, not-for-profit organization based in Berkeley, CA that is dedicated to helping nonsmokers breathe smokefree air since 1976.

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 10/13/2021 12:36 PM

Council File No: 18-1104

Comments for Public Posting: Greetings, Attached is a letter of support from the African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council regarding the sale of menthol and other flavored tobacco products in the City of Los Angeles. Menthol and other flavored tobacco products cause disease and death, especially in historically targeted groups like the African American community. New research shows that: "menthol cigarettes were responsible for 1.5 million new smokers, 157 000 smoking-related premature deaths and 1.5 million life-years lost among African Americans over 1980–2018. While African Americans constitute 12% of the total US population, these figures represent, respectively, a staggering 15%, 41% and 50% of the total menthol-related harm.." (Mendez & Le, 2021) (the full article and an accompanying editorial are also attached.) Los Angeles can be a leader in putting an end to this outright discriminatory health disparity. Please do not hesitate to reach out to AATCLC with any questions or concerns. In community, -- Nicole Turkson, Project Coordinator African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council (888) 881-6619, ext 102 <https://www.savingblacklives.org/>



The African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council

October 8, 2021

To: Mayor Eric Garcetti, City Attorney Mike Feuer, City Controller Ron Galperin, Councilmember Gil Cedillo, Councilmember Paul Krekorian, Councilmember Bob Blumenfield, Councilmember Nithya Raman, Councilmember Paul Koretz, Councilmember Nury Martinez, Councilmember Monica Rodriguez, Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Councilmember Curren D. Price Jr., Councilmember Mark Ridley-Thomas, Councilmember Mike Bonin, Councilmember John Lee, Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell, Councilmember Kevin de Leon, and Councilmember Joe Buscaino

From: The African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council

Re: Prohibit the Sale of Menthol and all Other Flavored Tobacco Products. No Exemptions: All Flavors, All Products, All Locations!

The African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council (AATCLC) strongly encourages the Los Angeles City Council to prohibit the sale of menthol and all flavored tobacco products. No exemptions. We are glad to see that the Council is finally addressing this issue and it couldn't come at a better time. We already know that 80% of youth, 12-17 start smoking using flavored cigarettes (Ambrose et al., 2015). Indeed, in the midst of the COVID 19 pandemic nothing could be more important than getting these products out of our community. We already know that smokers are more susceptible to COVID infection (CDC, 2020). If the Council truly wants a healthier Los Angeles, and we believe that you do, then it is imperative that the sale of menthol and all other flavored tobacco products be prevented and that the predatory marketing of these products be stopped and be recognized as a social injustice; an issue that disproportionately impacts poorer communities, marginalized groups, youths and communities of color.

Menthol the Ultimate Candy Flavor; It Helps the Poison Go Down Easier!

This is no minor matter. Menthol and flavored tobacco products are driving tobacco-related deaths and diseases nation-wide. While the use of non-flavored tobacco cigarettes has been decreasing, the use of menthol cigarettes is on the rise, among youth and adults; among Latinos, Blacks, and Whites (Villanti, 2016). Let's be clear, the majority of women smokers smoke menthol cigarettes; folks from the LGBTQ community disproportionately smoke these products;

47% of Latino smokers prefer menthol cigarettes, with 62% of Puerto Rican smokers using menthol; nearly 80% of Native Hawaiians; a majority of Filipinos; and a majority of smokers with behavioral health issues smoke menthol cigarettes. Frankly, the most marginalized groups disproportionately use these so-called “minty” products (CDC, 2010; Fallin, 2015; Forbes, 2013; Delnevo, 2011; Hawaii State Dept. of Health, 2009; Euromonitor, 2008; Hickman, 2015).

Be appraised that 85% African American adults and 94% of Black youth who smoke are using menthol products (Giovino, 2013). These striking statistics arise from the predatory marketing of these products in the Black Community, where there are more advertisements, more lucrative promotions, and *cheaper prices* for menthol cigarettes compared to other communities (Henriksen et al., 2011; Seidenberg et al., 2010). These predacious practices for the past 50 years have led to Black folks dying disproportionately from heart attacks, lung cancer, strokes and other tobacco related diseases (RSG, 2014).

Take note that new research, just published this month shows that menthol cigarettes were responsible for 1.5 million new smokers, 157 000 smoking-related premature deaths and 1.5 million life-years lost among African Americans over 1980–2018. While African Americans constitute 12% of the total US population, these figures represent, respectively, a staggering 15%, 41% and 50% of the total menthol-related harm (Mendez & Le, 2021)

The Council should be aware that menthol is an anesthetic by definition, and as if to add insult to injury, masks the harsh taste of tobacco and allows for deeper inhalation of toxins and greater amounts of nicotine. The greater the nicotine intake, the greater the addiction. Hence, it is no surprise menthol cigarette users find it harder to quit than non-menthol cigarette users (Ton et al., 2015; Levy et al., 2011). The “cool refreshing taste of menthol” heralded by the tobacco industry is just a guise; ultimately, menthol and all flavors allow the poisons in cigarettes and cigarillos “to go down easier!”

Hookah: The Manipulation of Culture for Industry Profits!

While we have all become aware of the meteoric rise of E-Cigarette use, especially among kids, another addictive product is growing in popularity: flavored shisha / Hookah. Let’s not be fooled: passing tobacco smoke through water does nothing to stop the user from inhaling all the toxins, nicotine and cancer-causing chemicals associated with tobacco smoking. Let’s be clear, Hookah is just as deadly as cigarettes, if not more. Studies show that in a single hookah smoking session of 40 minutes, smokers consume 25 times the tar, 125 times the smoke 2.5 times the nicotine and 10 times the carbon monoxide compared to smoking a cigarette (Primack et al., 2016). Moreover, both patrons and employees at Hookah lounges are exposed to elevated levels of 2nd hand smoke an already recognized cause of cancer (Zhou et al., 2016)

Then there is the fiction that Hookah smoking is a 1000-year-old tradition in the Middle East. Look, tobacco only made its way to Europe some 500 years ago and only gradually made its way to the Middle East 3 to 4 hundred years ago. Make no mistake about it, it’s the Hookah Lounge owner’s manipulation of culture argument that is used to attract more business and

profits. Flavored shisha like Blue Mist, Irish Kiss and Sex on the Beach has nothing to do with Middle Eastern Culture. Once it was determined in the 1960s that smoking kills, Islamic Leaders deemed tobacco, Hookah and Shisha Forbidden. At bottom, Hookah lounges with their nightclub atmosphere have nothing to do with Middle Eastern Culture, rather it's all about the Benjamin's! It's not about getting rid of all hookahs or all tobacco products, it's about getting rid of all flavors, at all places, in all products, period.

We Can't Wait on the State or the FDA

The AATCLC is calling upon the Los Angeles City Council to join a growing number of cities, counties and states around the country that are prohibiting, jurisdiction-wide, the sales of menthol cigarettes and all other flavored tobacco products. In June 2018, San Francisco voters passed the first ever citywide restriction on the sales of all flavored tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes and flavored e-cigarette juices. This "strongest flavor ban law ever" was rapidly replicated in the numerous cities in California and around the Country, including Oakland, Alameda, Hayward, Fremont, Berkeley and Sacramento, just to mention a few. Today over 60 municipalities prohibit the sale of all menthol tobacco products including flavored e-juices <https://no-smoke.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/flavored-tobacco-product-sales.pdf> Indeed, in June of 2020, the State of Massachusetts became the first State to prohibit the sale of menthol and all flavored tobacco products state-wide and in August of 2020 California followed suit and became the second state to do so. With the tobacco industry forcing a referendum of SB 793, it becomes even more imperative that local jurisdictions take steps to protect their citizenry. We can't wait on the State, let's take steps to make Los Angeles healthier now!

And while it is important that the FDA finally began the rulemaking process in April of 2021 to remove menthol cigarettes and flavored little cigars from the marketplace, this process will take years. First, the proposed rule will not be made public until April of 2022. Then, after 60-day public comment period, the tobacco industry will demand more time for comment, that has been granted in the past. Drawing out the comment period to 90 to 120 days. Once the public comment is over, the "rule" is sent to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), who's review could take a number of months. Once a final rule is made public and there is more public comment, the industry will sue to stop the process from going forward. And may sue for numerous reasons. **The bottom line is that we can't wait of the FDA.** Localities, like Los Angeles, must take steps to protect the health of their citizens, lives are at stake.

Who Are the Racists: The Tobacco Control Advocates or the Tobacco Industry?

We should note that some groups, spurred on and funded by the tobacco industry, have been spreading falsehoods, stating that restricting the sale of menthol and flavored tobacco products, including flavored e-juices will lead to the "criminalization" of particularly young Black men. Nothing could be further from the truth. All ordinances adopted around the country would ***prohibit the sale*** of flavored products, it would ***not prohibit the possession*** of these products. The facts are that the adoption of menthol restrictions will not lead to police having any greater

interaction with any youth; it won't be illegal to possess these products, just retailers cannot sell them. Indeed, when these ordinances were passed in Oakland and San Francisco, the Police Chiefs stood with us and said there would be no arrest for possession of these products.

These same groups rail about “unintended consequences.” We respond: **Look at the Intended Consequences!** As mentioned before, Black folks die disproportionately from tobacco related diseases of heart disease, lung cancer, and stroke compared to other racial and ethnic groups. (RSG, 2014); menthol cigarettes and flavored little cigars are the agents of that destruction. It is estimated that 45,000 Black folks die each year from tobacco related diseases (RSG, 1998). In this regard, the Council should remove all criminal penalties associated with the purchase, use and possession of all tobacco products. Decriminalize tobacco! Hold retail owners responsible, not clerks, don't punish kids!

Still other groups funded by the tobacco industry insist that removing menthol cigarettes and flavored little cigars would be taking away “our” cigarette; we'd be discriminatory; racist. This line of argumentation stands history on its head. As was pointed out earlier, it was and is the tobacco industry that predatorially markets these products in the Black Community. The facts are these: there are more advertisements, more lucrative promotions, and most disturbing is that menthol cigarettes are *cheaper in the Black Community* compared to other communities (Henriksen et al., 2011; Seidenberg et al., 2010). This is how these flavored death sticks became “our” cigarettes, they pushed it down our throats!

The AATCLC

Formed in 2008, the African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council is composed of a cadre of dedicated community activists, academics, public health advocates and researchers. Even though based in California, we are national in our scope and reach. We have partnered with community stakeholders, elected officials, and public health agencies, from Chicago, Boston and Minneapolis to Berkeley and San Francisco. Our work has shaped the national discussion and direction of tobacco control policy, practices, and priorities, especially as they affect the lives of Black Americans, African immigrant populations and ultimately all smokers. The AATCLC has been at the forefront in elevating the regulation of mentholated and other flavored tobacco products on the national tobacco control agenda, including testifying at the FDA hearings in 2010 and 2011 when the agency was first considering the removal of menthol cigarettes from the marketplace. In November of 2019 we testified on Capitol Hill in support of HR 2339 (The Pallone Bill), this bill would prohibit the manufacturing and sale of menthol and all flavored tobacco products throughout the United States. This Bill was passed in the House of Representatives in February of 2020 but went nowhere in the Senate. In June of 2020 the AATCLC along with its partner Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) filed a lawsuit against the FDA for dragging their feet by leaving menthol on the marketplace with overwhelming scientific evidence showing that it should be removed immediately. Subsequently and importantly the American Medical Association (AMA) and the National Medical Association (NMA) have joined the lawsuit as plaintiffs.

Call to Action!

Now is the time to adopt strong tobacco control measures that can protect our families. We already know that menthol and flavors “makes the poison go down easier.” Let’s not now allow menthol to make COVID-19 go down easier too! The Council needs to put the health of Los Angeles’s residents in the forefront of their thoughts, not the interests and profits of the tobacco industry, the vaping industry and their surrogates. This is not the time for half-steps, like continuing to allow these products to be sold in adult-only venues, rather it is time to take a stand for the public’s health and say: **No Selling of Menthol Cigarettes and All Other Flavored Tobacco Products, including Flavored E-Juices and Flavored Hookah in Los Angeles!** Say “No” to the continued predatory marketing of menthol flavored tobacco products to our youth and say “Yes” to the health and welfare of our kids, who are the most vulnerable. In fact, say “Yes” to the protection for **all** residents of Los Angeles.

We are all counting on you!

Sincerely,



Phillip Gardiner, Dr. P.H. Co-Chair AATCLC www.savingblacklives.org



Carol McGruder, Co-Chair AATCLC



Valerie Yerger, N.D., Co-Chair AATCLC

Communication from Public

Name: UCLA AntiVaping Champions Task Force
Date Submitted: 10/13/2021 12:43 PM
Council File No: 18-1104
Comments for Public Posting: Dear Mayor Garcetti and City of Los Angeles Councilmembers,
Our organization, the UCLA AntiVaping Champions Task Force
is among the growing number of coalition members to L.A.
Families Fighting Flavored Tobacco.

October 6, 2021

The Honorable Eric Garcetti, Mayor of Los Angeles
Members of the Los Angeles City Council
Los Angeles City Hall
200 North Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mayor Garcetti and City of Los Angeles Councilmembers,

Our organization, the UCLA AntiVaping Champions Task Force is among the growing number of coalition members to L.A. Families Fighting Flavored Tobacco.

At the request of the Council, the City Attorney's Office submitted a draft ordinance that would end the sale of flavored tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and menthol flavored products. This ordinance will save lives and improve health outcomes. Removing flavored tobacco products removes the lure that has seen an epidemic increase in teen and youth usage of tobacco products.

However, we must also state that the exemption for flavored shisha products ignores another clear threat to young adults and teens. We are in full support and **urge** you to reconsider making this a more comprehensive ordinance by removing the exemptions for flavored hookah.

"Because of the way a hookah is used, people who smoke hookah may absorb more of the toxic substances also found in cigarette smoke than people who smoke cigarettes do. In a typical 1-hour hookah smoking session, users may inhale 100–200 times the amount of smoke they would inhale from a single cigarette. In a single water pipe session, users are exposed to up to 9 times the carbon monoxide and 1.7 times the nicotine of a single cigarette."

-From the Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Our coalition and health advocates, civil rights organization, concerned parents and students **urge you to move swiftly and schedule a hearing of the ordinance at a regular meeting in October.**

Contrary to what Big Tobacco advertises, tobacco is an addictive and deadly product that is addicting a new generation of smokers to nicotine. According to the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, tobacco use causes nearly a third of all cancer deaths in California.

We proudly join with the L.A. Families Fighting Flavored Tobacco coalition led by the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, the American Heart Association, and the American Lung Association, and many Angelenos who are standing up to Big Tobacco to protect our community's health.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Denise M. Nunez', with a stylized, flowing script.

Denise M. Nunez MD, MPH
Director, UCLA Anti-Vaping Champions Task Force
Preventive Medicine & Public Health Physician
University of California, Los Angeles
dmnunez@mednet.ucla.edu

Communication from Public

Name: United Parents and Students

Date Submitted: 10/13/2021 12:45 PM

Council File No: 18-1104

Comments for Public Posting: Dear Mayor Garcetti and City of Los Angeles Councilmembers, Our organization, United Parents and Students, is among the growing number of coalition members to L.A. Families Fighting Flavored Tobacco. At the request of the Council, the City Attorney's Office submitted a draft ordinance that would end the sale of flavored tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and menthol flavored products. This ordinance will save lives and improve health outcomes. Removing flavored tobacco removes the lure that has led to an epidemic increase in teen and youth tobacco use. However, it includes an exemption that would still allow the sale of flavored hookah.

October 4, 2021

The Honorable Eric Garcetti, Mayor of Los Angeles
Members of the Los Angeles City Council
Los Angeles City Hall
200 North Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mayor Garcetti and City of Los Angeles Councilmembers,

Our organization, United Parents and Students, is among the growing number of coalition members to L.A. Families Fighting Flavored Tobacco.

At the request of the Council, the City Attorney's Office submitted a draft ordinance that would end the sale of flavored tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and menthol flavored products. This ordinance will save lives and improve health outcomes. Removing flavored tobacco removes the lure that has led to an epidemic increase in teen and youth tobacco use. However, it includes an exemption that would still allow the sale of flavored hookah.

Because communities that have been historically targeted by Big Tobacco (LGBTQ+, Asian, and Hispanic/Latinx) tend to use hookah at higher rates than the general population, exempting hookah from flavored tobacco sales restrictions perpetuates health inequities. The desire to protect the public health of *all* Los Angeles residents is driving concerned parents, youth, civil rights groups, public health advocates, and organizations like ours, to ask the Los Angeles City Council to remove the exemption for flavored hookah.

We urge the City Council to take swift action and schedule a hearing of the ordinance at a regular meeting in October

We proudly join the L.A. Families Fighting Flavored Tobacco Coalition in standing up to Big Tobacco to save lives, reduce health risks among some of our most vulnerable populations, and be a model for California and the rest of the country to emulate.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Larry Fondation
Executive Director
United Parents and Students