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Advocates Call to End the Sale of All Flavored Tobacco Products in Phoenix

PHOENIX – A wide-ranging coalition of advocates and organizations have joined Phoenix City Councilman Michael Nowakowski to call for an end to the sale of all flavored tobacco products in Phoenix, to reduce youth tobacco use and save lives. Councilmember Nowakowski plans to sponsor a citywide ordinance that would end the sale of flavored tobacco products, including flavored e-cigarettes, menthol cigarettes, flavored cigars and flavored smokeless tobacco. Research shows that 80 percent of teens who have ever used tobacco started with a flavored product.

“We have made great strides to reduce tobacco use, but there is still more we can do,” said Councilman Nowakowski. “In Arizona, the four leading causes of death – cancer, heart disease, stroke and pulmonary disease – are linked to tobacco use. Today, flavored tobacco is attracting and hooking kids at alarming rates resulting in a new generation addicted to nicotine. Now is the time to come together as a city and protect our youth.”

Flavored tobacco has fueled a public health emergency in Phoenix. One out of six Arizona high school students uses e-cigarettes and more than 5.3 million kids use them nationwide. The e-cigarette companies have hooked kids with sweet flavors such as watermelon, cotton candy, gummy bear, mint, and menthol, putting them at risk of lifelong nicotine addiction. Ninety-seven percent of youth e-cigarette users report using a flavored product in the past month.

It is not just flavored e-cigarettes that are having negative effects. For decades, the tobacco industry has aggressively targeted communities of color with flavored products. Forty-seven percent of Hispanics who smoke and 85 percent of all African Americans who smoke use menthol cigarettes. Seven out of 10 African American youth who smoke and 57 percent of Hispanic youth who smoke use menthol cigarettes. This results in a disproportionate burden of tobacco-related disease and death. African Americans are more likely to die from tobacco-related diseases like cancer, heart disease and stroke than any other race or ethnic group in the United States.

“There has never been a more important time to take action to reduce smoking and vaping,” said Will Humble, executive director of the Arizona Public Health Association. “As educators and advocates who aim to improve the health and well-being of all Arizonans, we strongly support the campaign to end the sale of flavored tobacco products. By offering menthol, fruit and candy flavored tobacco products, companies target kids with the intent of hooking the next generation.”

Today, as the world combats the coronavirus (COVID-19), it has never been more important to take every measure possible to keep our lungs healthy. COVID-19 attacks the lungs, and behaviors that weaken the lungs can put individuals at greater risk.

“We are proud to stand with Councilman Nowakowski and coalition members to support ending the sale of all flavored tobacco products,” said Laura Capello, president and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arizona.



“It is critical that we stop the tobacco industry from targeting and addicting our youth with tobacco in any form, including e-cigarettes.”

The following organizations are committed to helping Phoenix lead in the effort to eliminate the sale of all flavored tobacco products through a comprehensive ordinance that includes licensing all tobacco retailers and active enforcement that includes fines and license suspension and revocation for non-compliant retailers:

- American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
- American Heart Association
- American Lung Association
- Arizona Alliance for Community Health Centers
- Arizona Asthma Coalition
- Arizonans Concerned About Smoking
- Arizona Nurses Association
- Arizona Public Health Association
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Central Arizona
- Boys and Girls Club of the Valley
- Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids
- Children’s Action Alliance
- Helping Enrich African American Lives Coalition
- Maricopa County Medical Society
- National African American Tobacco Prevention Network
- Parents Against Vaping
- School Nurses Organization of Arizona
- Villa del Sol

With enactment of the ordinance, Phoenix would join a [growing number of states and cities](#) across the country that that have passed similar laws to end the sale of all flavored tobacco products, including e-cigarettes.

For more information visit www.flavorshookkidsphoenix.org and follow on social media at @FlavorsHookKidsPhoenix .

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