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Maricopa Area Labor Federation Endorses Campaign to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco in Phoenix

PHOENIX – The Maricopa Area Labor Federation (MALF) announced it has formally joined the Flavors Hook Kids Phoenix coalition to end the sale of all flavored tobacco products in Phoenix.

MALF consists of over two dozen labor affiliates and represents the interests of working people. It mobilizes its members and community partners to advocate for social and economic justice. The MALF joins a broad coalition of advocates and organizations calling for an end to the sale of flavored tobacco products in Phoenix targeting youth and communities of color.

“After decades of progress in Arizona that reduced the use of tobacco products by young people, there has now been an alarming increase, brought on by the tobacco industry and its use of flavors to hook kids”, said Teresa D’Asaro, MALF Chair. “This is the very same ploy Big Tobacco has used for seven decades to target communities of color through menthol cigarettes. To be sure, the flavors ordinance addresses a public health concern. But it is also a long overdue social justice measure.”

To reduce youth tobacco use and save lives, Councilmember Michael Nowakowski plans to sponsor an 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.

As of the middle of March 2020 when schools closed because of the COVID-19 crisis, 19.6% of high school students and 4.7% of middle school students, 3.6 million youth currently use current e-cigarettes, many regularly. Nearly 40% of high school e-cigarette users and 20% of middle school e-cigarette users are vaping at least 20 days a month. Following the rise in e-cigarette use, the overall tobacco use rate among high school students in 2019 was at the highest level (31.2%) in 19 years.

One out of six Arizona high school students uses e-cigarettes. The e-cigarette companies have hooked kids with sweet flavors such as mocha, gummy bear, mango, mint, and menthol, putting kids at risk of a lifelong nicotine addiction.

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% of all African Americans who smoke use menthol cigarettes. Seven out of 10 African American youth who smoke and 57% 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.



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 Academy of Family Physicians
- Arizona Academy of Pediatricians
- Arizona Alliance for Community Health Centers
- Arizona Asthma Coalition
- Arizona Association of Health Plans
- Arizona Medical Association
- Arizona Nurses Association
- Arizona Osteopathic Medical Association
- Arizona Public Health Association
- Arizona School Administrators
- Arizona Thoracic Society
- Arizonans Concerned About Smoking
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arizona
- Black Nurses Association of Greater Phoenix Area
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Metropolitan Phoenix
- Chicanos Por La Causa
- Cancer Support Community - Arizona
- Children's Action Alliance
- Help Enrich African American Lives Coalition
- Maricopa County Medical Society
- National African American Tobacco Prevention Network
- notMYkids
- School Nurses Organization of Arizona
- Valle del Sol
- Health System Alliance of Arizona
 - Banner Health
 - Dignity Health
 - HonorHealth
 - Tenet Healthcare
- Maricopa Area Labor Federation

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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