

80% OF KIDS WHO EVER USED TOBACCO STARTED WITH A FLAVORED PRODUCT

Lifelong addiction often starts out sweet.
Let's stop **Big Tobacco** from poisoning our kids.



Subject: Support for Restricting the Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products, including Menthol, in San Jose

Dear Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers,

I am writing to endorse the efforts of the Tobacco-Free Coalition of Santa Clara County to restrict the sale of menthol, candy, and fruit flavored tobacco products in the City of San Jose.

Despite steep declines in the use of cigarettes among Santa Clara County youth, there has been a rapid increase in the use of other tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes and vaping devices. Eighty percent (80%) of current teen smokers started with a flavored tobacco product. The availability and use of flavored tobacco and nicotine products has skyrocketed in recent years. In Santa Clara County, 87% of tobacco retailers near schools sell flavored tobacco products. These products are widely available and sold inexpensively, priced at two or even three cigarillos for 99 cents. Flavored little cigars, cigarillos, smokeless tobacco, electronic cigarettes and vaping devices appeal to youth with flavors like menthol, chocolate, grape, cotton candy and fruit punch. The tobacco industry considers them "starter" products, establishing smoking habits in young people that can lead to a lifelong addiction.

In 2009, the Food and Drug Administration banned the sale of flavored cigarettes, but made an exclusion for menthol products. Research shows that the tobacco industry has specifically targeted the African American/Black communities in their marketing of menthol products. Menthol products mask the harshness of tobacco, making it easier to tolerate and harder to quit.

As a Californian, I am expressing my concern about the Tobacco Industry's deliberate marketing of tobacco products to youth and young adults through the addition of candy, mint, and fruit flavors that come in trendy packaging.

I believe we need to stop youth tobacco starter products that can lead to nicotine addiction and we need to act now to prevent the onset of serious chronic illnesses like heart disease, cancer, stroke, and asthma.

We urge you to consider restricting the sale of menthol, candy, and fruit flavored tobacco products within the City of San Jose. Thank you for your consideration and support of public health.

Sincerely,

Name (Print)

Date

City of Residence (If Individual)

Organization/School (If Applicable)