

TO: The Honorable Delores G. Kelley, Chair  
Members, Senate Finance Committee  
The Honorable Dereck E. Davis, Chair  
Members, House Economic Matters Committee  
The Honorable Brian E. Frosh

FROM: Tom Striplin, President, MD-DC Society for Respiratory Care

DATE: February 13, 2020

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 233 & House Bill 3 – *Business Regulation – Flavored Tobacco Products – Prohibition*

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The MD-DC Society for Respiratory Care Inc. is a non-profit affiliate of the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC). The society has a membership of 850 members and represents over 3,000 licensed respiratory therapists in Maryland and the District of Columbia. The MD-DC Society for Respiratory Care **supports** Senate Bill 233 and House Bill 3.

Respiratory Care Practitioners (RCP) work daily with patients who have various lung and respiratory illnesses. Many of them are adults who smoke tobacco products or used to, but increasingly their patients are younger. The recent onslaught of flavored tobacco products and e-cigarettes have led to a major increase in teenagers using tobacco products because they are lured in by the flavored tobacco products that are the subject of this legislation. “Young people who use e-cigarettes are four times more likely to start smoking cigarettes than their peers who do not vape. On top of that, e-cigarette use among young people, many of whom were not smokers in the first place, has skyrocketed in recent years, jumping 78% among high schoolers between 2017 and 2018 alone.” See <https://truthinitiative.org/our-top-issues/vaping-issue>.

RCP’s do not want any more patients with illnesses borne by tobacco use or e-cigarettes. The prohibition of flavored tobacco products contained in Senate Bill 233 and House Bill 3 is an important step in stopping the disturbing trend of younger patients with respiratory issues caused by these products. For these reasons, the Society supports this legislation.