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January 14, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chairman
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Senate Bill 239

Dear Chairman Pinsky,

I write today on behalf of, and at the request of, the Board of Education of St. Mary's County in support of Senate Bill 239 - St. Mary's County - Public and Nonpublic Schools - Prohibition on Possession of Tobacco Products by Minors. The bill was filed as a result of concerns raised with Senator Bailey following changes in previous legislation that removed all penalties for youth in possession of tobacco in various forms. We appreciate his understanding of our concerns regarding student usage of tobacco products.

Senate Bill 239 applies only to usage in schools in St. Mary's County. Additionally, the first consequence for possession or usage is attendance in a smoking cessation class which will provide valuable education and assistance to students to reinforce the dangers of smoking. Any additional offenses will subject the student to civil penalties rather than criminal penalties.

The Board of Education of St. Mary's County believes this is a reasoned approach that will assist us in protecting the health and well-being of our students. We respectfully request a **favorable report** on Senate Bill 239.

Respectfully,

Cathy Allen
Vice Chair
Board of Education of St. Mary's County

Cc: Senator Jack Bailey
Delegate Matthew Morgan
Delegate Gerald Clark
Delegate Brian Crosby