

JACK BAILEY  
*Legislative District 29*  
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Judicial Proceedings Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
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January 20, 2021

**Senate Bill 239 – St. Mary's County – Public and Nonpublic Schools – Prohibition on Possession of Tobacco Products by Minors**

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee,

As the Senator representing St. Mary's County, I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 239 – St. Mary's County – Public and Nonpublic Schools – Prohibition on Possession of Tobacco Products by Minors. This bill would prohibit a person under the age of 18 from possessing a tobacco product in school buildings or on school grounds in St. Mary's County.

In the 2019 Session, the General Assembly passed legislation raising the minimum age to purchase tobacco products from 18 to 21. At the same time, this legislation repealed the prohibition on a minor possessing tobacco products or electronic smoking devices. Following passage of this law, the St. Mary's County Public School System became concerned about students possessing tobacco products in our schools. Following discussions with our Sheriff's Office and State's Attorney, the school administration requested introduction of this local legislation to assist them with keeping tobacco out of our schools. I have personally witnessed this problem in our local schools and strongly support their efforts.

The purpose of this bill is to ensure that these tobacco products can be removed from school grounds and to ensure that children who are using these products get the help that they need to quit using them. Tobacco use by minors, particularly the increased use of e-cigarettes, is a serious issue. As you may be aware, several Maryland jurisdictions are suing e-cigarette manufacturer Juul for marketing their products towards minors. Senate Bill 239 is narrowly focused and only applies to possession of tobacco products by minors on school property, and does not impose any criminal penalties for violations. A violation of this law would be a civil offense, and the first violation would result only in the minor being required to attend a tobacco cessation program.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 239. Thank you for your consideration of this important local bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bailey", written over a horizontal line.

Senator Jack Bailey  
District 29  
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties