

Lisa Cataldi

From: Mohamed Baccouche <adriancegrouprillc@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 29, 2021 10:42 AM
To: House Health and Human Services Committee
Subject: HB 6396 Mohamed Baccouche /East Providence Mobil.

My name is Mohamed Baccouche, I am writing to you as a resident and small business operator in East Providence. My business employs 6 RI residents. I am disappointed to hear that the Rhode Island State Legislature is considering a ban on menthol cigarettes, flavored dip, and flavored cigars across the state. I urge you to oppose this measure.

We agree we need to address underage vaping, but banning all flavored tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes, makes no sense.

As a Retailer, We are the gatekeepers for tobacco products. We are the only ones checking IDs, face to face, and keeping age-restricted products out of the hands of kids. We invested A Lot of Money on a Technology That verifies Age propriete for Smoking wish is 21 Years old now.

Flavored tobacco bans don't work - they just push the demand for these products to black markets, illegal street sales, and other states (NH).

It has been well documented that the federal government is taking action on vape and flavored tobacco. Let the agency with the most resources do their science-based work. This is not a policy that should be made by states. The Massachusetts ban has failed and Rhode Island would be wise not to follow.

Rhode Island's small business owners have struggled to keep their doors open during this prolonged economic slowdown. Not only have gas and in-store sales been impacted, but I've also had to invest in additional safety measures resulting in unforeseen costs negatively impacting my bottom line.

This broad ban on flavored tobacco products would jeopardize a significant portion of my revenue and quite frankly, could force my business to close its doors. A ban on these products would put hundreds of Rhode Island jobs at risk.

I urge you to vote against HB 6396. Please do not move forward with such a broad overreaching ban.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mohamed Baccouche