Council Member Russ Stark
15 Kellogg Boulevard West
310-D City Hall
St. Paul, MN 55102

Dear Council Member Stark,

It is not fair to single out certain smokers. Banning various tobacco flavors and menthol cigarettes will just be a big inconvenience that is not necessary. Because I am thirty-one years old and have long been considered a legal adult, I can make my own decisions without influence from the city council. This ban will also hurt our businesses. For these reasons, it should not be passed.

Banning menthol and certain types of tobacco flavors will not stop children from smoking, if that is truly your concern. There are laws in place and rules for stores to follow to prevent underage access to tobacco. Even with the ban on flavored and menthol cigarettes, minors will get something else to use as a tool for their rebellion. Currently, there is a lot more education about the dangers of smoking, and kids are learning at a younger age. My children are five and eight years old, and they receive information about smoking in school and through public service advertisements on television. This is more successful than a ban.

Usually, I buy my cigarettes right down the street at the local gas station. Most of the time, I will purchase a pop while I am there. If people go outside the city to obtain their menthols, it will mean fewer sales at these businesses. Because I am close to the city line, it will not be that difficult to go outside the limits; it will just be an unwanted inconvenience. Our economy and job market are not too bad but could use improvement. Taking business away from Saint Paul will not help the situation. We need our jobs to stay here, and I, of all people, have a vested interest in this. Currently, I am unemployed and looking for a position in the automotive or forklift repair field. Make sure tobacco users are not singled out, and protect our businesses and economy by fighting against this proposal.

Thank you,

Laurie Parham

Laurie Parham
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