

Marty Thomas
1205 Van Buren Ave
Saint Paul, MN 55104-2013

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

Dear Council Member Stark:

With a myriad of public tobacco use prohibitions already currently in place, I am not comfortable with elected officials restricting smoking even more. As a smoker who purchases menthol cigarettes, this may prove to be very inconvenient for me. Therefore, I am against this proposed law to ban menthol cigarettes and minty tobacco flavors.

This measure was intended to target youths and prevent them from smoking. However, I do not see a disproportionate number of young people trying to buy menthol cigarettes. Furthermore, this proposed law appears to be discriminatory as it mostly targets minorities, who are more apt to buy mentholated cigarettes.

Now forty-four years old, I have been smoking for nearly two decades. Newports were my favorite brand before I switched to Marlboro Black Menthols. Most of my family and friends also smoke menthol cigarettes and are disturbed that they must now purchase them at liquor stores that close at 10:00 p.m. while other stores stay open until 2:00 a.m. This in no way is fair.

As a bartender who goes to work late and leaves in the wee hours of the morning, I suspect that small businesses are going to lose sales due to this initiative. As of now when I leave work, I normally spend \$20 nightly purchasing cigarettes, coffee, and scratch-offs at the store. This will stop because liquor stores will already be closed when I leave my job. It is my hope that you will vote to stop this ban from negatively impacting the citizens of St. Paul and the businesses that support us.

Sincerely,

Marty Thomas

