



African American Leadership Forum

Our voices. Our future.

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Members of the St. Paul City Council
15 Kellogg Blvd. West, 310 City Hall
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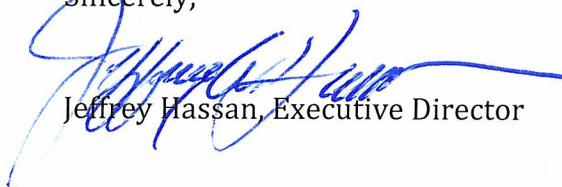
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The African American Leadership Forum (AALF) is an organization that focuses on the health of our communities. In 2016, AALF received a State Health Improvement Program (SHIP) grant from the Minnesota Department of Health to study the effects of menthol tobacco smoking in the Twin Cities African American community. Evidence from the Minnesota tobacco litigation proved that, among others, the tobacco industry targeted African Americans, and young people, in particular, with its menthol products. Tobacco-related illnesses are the number one cause of death in the African American community.

Our SHIP surveys of more than 500 African Americans in the Twin Cities metro area found that 84% of African American smokers in the metro area smoke menthol; and, more importantly, 86% of our respondents' support laws to reduce the harmful effects of tobacco smoking.

The ordinance you are considering would go a long way towards addressing these issues, by reducing youth exposure to these harmful products at stores they routinely shop. You can put the lives and interest of young people before that of tobacco industry profits. The choice is clear. We urge the St. Paul City Council to continue to be a leader in promoting a healthy community by keeping tobacco out of the hands of our young people. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Hassan, Executive Director

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