



"We are Better Together"

• Pastor Billy Russell, President, Minnesota State Baptist Convention, Inc. • 612.237.9517

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September 21, 2017

Dear Council President Stark and Members of the Saint Paul City Council,

I was at the public hearing last night, with my 11 year-old granddaughter, in regard to the proposed ordinance to restrict the sale of menthol tobacco to adult-only tobacco stores. I was taken aback and highly offended by the comment made, "that this doesn't cost the people in the green shirts anything". I say, **HOW DARE HE.**

Most of them said 40 to 50% of their tobacco sales come from menthol products. We know that 88% of African American's who smoke, smoke menthols, which means the majority of their customers are African American.

So what they are saying to me is they build their profits on the backs of and over the dead bodies of African Americans – again. They are saying loud and clear, "**Black lives don't matter**".

This mentality is reminiscent of how many in this country and in this community gained their wealth off the free labor of African Americans, and over their lynched and burned bodies.

The targeting of African Americans has been intentional. I am sure you are familiar with the statement by RJ Reynolds Executive in 1971, "We don't smoke that s\*\*\*. We just sell it. We reserve the right to smoke for the young, the poor, the black and stupid."

This same type of sentiment was portrayed in the Hollywood blockbuster The Godfather about drugs. "... sell 'em to the Darkies... they're animals anyway, so let them lose their souls".

So once again, you win and we die – **Black lives don't matter.**

For me alone, this has cost me the life of my mother, the life of a husband, the life of 2 aunts – and he has the audacity to say it costs me nothing.

Menthol is so addictive that it makes it extremely hard to near impossible to quit. So this fight is about saving lives. We cannot afford to have another generation sentenced to death because large tobacco needs to replace those that have died from smoking related illnesses with warm, young, black bodies. Their argument is about profits and our argument is about life.

So, what you are telling us is that Black lives "still" don't matter! God help us when we value the dollar over a life, any life.

Respectfully,  
Dr. Sylvia Amos, President  
Women's Auxiliary

#### Member Directory - March 2014

##### MINNEAPOLIS CHURCHES:

Berean Baptist Church  
Bethesda Baptist Church  
Bible Based Baptist Church  
Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church  
God's Revelation  
Greater Friendship Baptist Church

Greater Mount Vernon Baptist Church  
Macedonia Baptist Church  
New Beginnings Baptist Tabernacle  
New Bethel Baptist Church  
New Mount Calvary  
Galilee Missionary Baptist Church  
New Salem Missionary Baptist Church

North Community Baptist Church  
NuWay Baptist Church  
Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church  
The Purpose Church  
Redeemer Baptist Church  
Seven Star Baptist Church  
Greater St. Johns Baptist Church

True Vine Missionary Baptist Church  
Zion Baptist Church  
New Faith Missionary Baptist Church  
Greater Mount Nebo Baptist Church  
SAINT PAUL CHURCHES:  
Morning Star Baptist Church  
Mount Olivet Baptist Church

New Birth Missionary Baptist Church  
New Hope Baptist Church  
Pilgrim Baptist Church  
Progressive Baptist Church  
Mt. Mariah M. B. Church



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