



VIETNAMESE SOCIAL SERVICES OF MINNESOTA
CƠ QUAN XÃ HỘI VIỆT NAM MINNESOTA

Dear Mayor Coleman and St. Paul Council Members:

My name is Dung Pham and I'm the Health Programs Manager here at Vietnamese Social Services of MN. I've spent the past 19 years working to help improve the lives of Vietnamese-Americans here in St. Paul. Many of our Vietnamese clients smoke and most of them began smoking before the age of 18 years old. Many want to quit but find it extremely difficult to.

I would like to ask you and all council members to please keep future generations away from a lifetime of tobacco addiction by supporting the Menthol Flavored Tobacco ordinance.

Again, on behalf of Vietnamese Social Services of MN, please vote "YES" in passing the Menthol Flavored Tobacco ordinance in the great city of St. Paul.

Best regards,

Dung Pham
Health Program Manager
Vietnamese Social Services of Minnesota
Phone: 651-641-7270
Fax: 651-641-8908
Email: dungpham@vssmn.org

Saint Paul City Council
15 Kellogg Blvd. West
310 City Hall
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Saint Paul City Council,

I have grown up in Saint Paul my whole life and have seen the devastating effects tobacco has had on my friends and family. As a young person, I support taking menthol tobacco out of stores kids can enter. I am tired of seeing my community suffer from tobacco-related diseases. My community isn't healthy and I don't want my younger siblings to become addicted to these deadly products. I hope you take a stand to support restricting menthol tobacco to adult-only tobacco shops. It's the right thing to do.

Sincerely,

Anthony Gilmore JH

Saint Paul City Council
15 Kellogg Blvd. West
310 City Hall
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Members of the Saint Paul City Council:

I'm a Saint Paul resident and I support the ordinance to restrict menthol tobacco.

As a former smoker, I'm angry that the tobacco industry tricked me into using their products. When I was a kid, I'd visit corner stores to buy snacks, and I'd see advertisements selling menthol and an entire wall of enticing menthol cigarette packs. The ads were cool, and I wanted to be cool, so I started smoking menthol. I had a very difficult time quitting and wished I never started. I don't want anyone to start smoking because they were persuaded to by the clever marketing schemes of the tobacco industry.

Moving menthol products to adult only stores protects people from the pervasive and influential marketing strategies of the tobacco industry. This is a straightforward idea that will save lives in our city.

I hope I can count on your support in this.

Thank you,

William J. Bennett
756 UNIVERSITY AVE W.
ST PAUL MN 55104

October 19, 2017

City Council
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.
Room 310
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

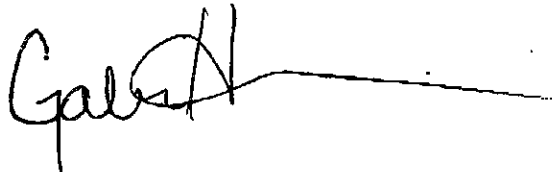
I don't think the City Council fully understands how the menthol tobacco ban is going to affect communities. We rely on these stores to buy the things our families need, and these stores rely on the sales of menthol to keep their doors open. This ban is going to hurt people.

I do not have easy access to transportation, so it is important to me that my neighborhood stores remain open and continue to sell their products at a fair and low cost. The menthol ban will make that almost impossible to do.

People will continue to smoke; a longer commute to buy a pack isn't going to stop them. However, this ban will make it incredibly difficult for me to get the things I need for my family. It will be very cold soon and carrying groceries across town in the kind of winters we experience here in St. Paul will not be good for my health.

Please think about how far-reaching the effects of this ban will be before placing your vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gabriel", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

October 19, 2017

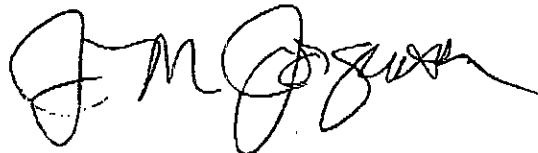
City Council
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.
Room 310
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

The menthol tobacco ban will greatly inconvenience me. Not everyone has easy access to transportation, and this ban will make menthol smokers travel farther to get their cigarettes. People who smoke regular cigarettes will get to continue on as they always have.

Don't pick winners and losers like that. It will not deter smokers; it will only make it harder for menthol smokers. It isn't right to target one community and not the other. Please vote against the menthol ban.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. M. [unclear]". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

October 19, 2017

City Council
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.
Room 310
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

I do not agree with the menthol ban being proposed by our City Council. This ban is not going to keep people from smoking, however, it is going to cause a great disconnect between the City Council members and people in my community. This ban is going to hurt the stores we rely on heavily in our community for not only our tobacco needs, but also other daily essentials.

The loss of profit from menthol products is going to hit retailers hard. They are going to have to make up for that loss somehow, and that will either be by raising prices on other products or laying people off.

No one comes out a winner from this ban.

Please vote no on this harmful ban.

Sincerely,

Deanna Dennis

October 19, 2017

City Council
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.
Room 310
St. Paul, MN 55102

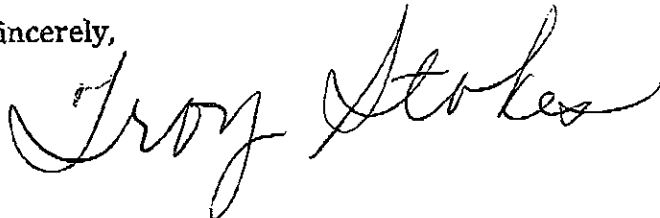
St. Paul City Council Members,

The menthol tobacco ban is misguided at best. This ban is not going to stop teen smoking. Teens are getting their hands on tobacco from their friends, not directly from retailers in St. Paul. We need to focus our effort and attention on creating and supporting educational programs that teach kids the harmful effects of cigarettes.

Education is a solution that not only is proven effective but does not take away any rights from adults or harm retailers.

The menthol ban has far too many negative consequences. We should be looking for solutions that have more positive than negative outcomes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Troy Stokes". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

October 19, 2017

City Council
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.
Room 310
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

City Council, the next time you have to go to the grocery store I challenge you to leave your cars behind. Try to navigate through the city to your closest grocery store or corner market. If you're lucky, one will be close by. Then make your way home with your arms full of bags -- it is not the easiest task in the world.

Now imagine that store near your home closed because it couldn't make up the losses it faced due to the menthol ban being passed. You now have to travel even farther away from home just to get dinner for your family.

This may not be something you worry about in your daily lives, but it is something I worry about. This menthol ban is going to deeply affect the stores I rely on in my community, which will affect my life.

Please vote no when it comes to this harmful menthol tobacco ban.

Sincerely,

Aronto Wines

October 19, 2017

City Council
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.
Room 310
St. Paul, MN 55102

St. Paul City Council Members,

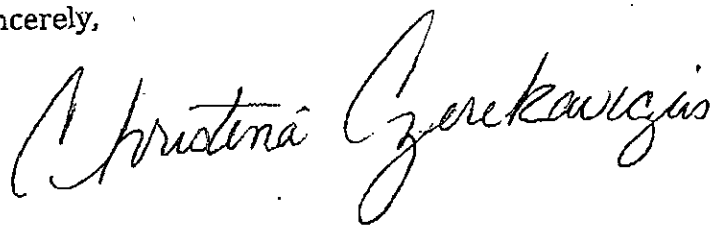
The menthol ban being proposed by the City Council is an unfair ban on both the consumer and retailers. How can it be justified that tobacco only shops are just fine to sell tobacco but convenience stores and corner markets with the same exact license cannot anymore under this ordinance?

How is it fair that someone who smokes regular cigarettes can continue on with life as usual while menthol smokers now have to travel across town or even outside of town just to buy the product they prefer?

This ban is singling people out, and it is not right. You are vilifying certain people and businesses for no reason.

City Council, please rethink the position you are taking with this ban before voting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christina Gerekawiczis". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

October 19, 2017

City Council
15 W. Kellogg Blvd.
Room 310
St. Paul, MN 55102

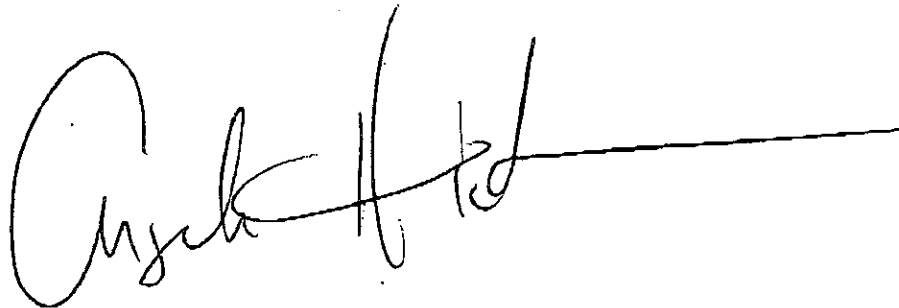
St. Paul City Council Members,

I do not see the menthol ban as a positive step forward for the city of St. Paul. There is already a social divide between the people who smoke and those who do not. People who smoke are often looked down upon. And now you are creating a divide within a divide. Menthol smokers are now the worst of the worst.

Why are we trying to pass ordinances that isolate people? Why is it okay for non-menthol smokers to continue on with their day as normal while we force menthol smokers across town to 1 of 12 tobacco shops?

This ban is sending a strong message, whether it is intentional or not. City Council, I urge you to really think about what you are saying when you cast your vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy H. H. H.", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.