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Nicolla Ross

Los Angeles County Division Office

816 S. Figueroa Street
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Phone: 213.291.7041

Fax: 213.291.7002

www.heart.org



March 22, 2019

Councilmember David Ryu

Chair of Health, Education, Neighborhoods, Parks, Arts, and River Committee

City Council, c/o City Clerk, Room 395

City Hall, 200 North Spring Street

Los Angeles, CA 90012-4801

RE: Motion 18-1104 Flavored Tobacco Products / Youth Tobacco Use / Sale Restriction / Proposed Strategy

Dear Councilmember David Ryu:

The American Heart Association supports Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell and motion 18-1104 and its intent to ban flavored tobacco products for its detrimental effects on youth. This proposed ordinance will limit access to a variety of flavored tobacco products which are the tobacco industry's primary method for targeting and hooking new smokers.

Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States, claiming on average 480,000 lives every year. It increases the risk for heart disease and stroke, especially in those who are genetically predisposed. Smoking decreases our ability to exercise, increases the tendency for blood clots, and decreases the good cholesterol in our bodies. The best way to prevent tobacco-related illness and death is to prevent people from starting to smoke in the first place.

Flavors including grape, menthol, cotton candy, bubble gum and gummy bears mask the harsh taste of tobacco and are highly appealing to youth, encouraging young smokers.

- According to California Healthy Kids Survey results, more than 1 in 5 (24%) of Los Angeles Unified School District 11th-grade smokers reported using electronic cigarettes or other vaping devices which capitalize on flavors.¹
- In California, 9.4% of young adults (18-24) currently use e-cigarettes.

The tobacco industry targets young people and communities of color with flavored tobacco products. Tobacco companies have historically targeted African-American communities with aggressive marketing of mentholated tobacco products and it is no coincidence that 95% of African-American youth smokers report smoking menthol-flavored cigarettes.² As a result, African Americans bear a disproportionate burden of tobacco-related disease and death; 47,000 African Americans die annually from smoking-

¹ California Healthy Kids Survey. LAUSD - CHKS Sample Secondary 2016-2017 Main Report. https://data.calschls.org/resources/LAUSD_CHKS_Sample_1617_Sec_CHKS.pdf.

² Giovino, G.A., et al., Differential trends in cigarette smoking in the USA: is menthol slowing progress? Tobacco Control, 2013.

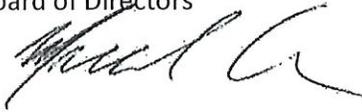
related illnesses, making tobacco use the largest preventable cause of death among African Americans.

This proposed policy is an opportunity to protect our communities from flavored tobacco products – including mint and menthol - and is crucial to preventing a lifetime of tobacco addiction. The American Heart Association respectfully asks for your support of this vital health policy to ensure that all Angelenos have the healthy and prosperous lives they deserve.

Sincerely,



Bob Lundy
Founding Partner
Hooper, Lundy and Bookman PC
Chairman of the LA County
Board of Directors



Micah Ali, President
Compton Unified School District



Ravi Dave, MD, Cardiologist
UCLA Health System



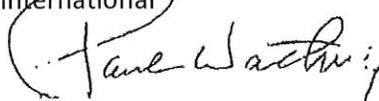
Alice Issai, President
Adventist Health Glendale



Mika Leah, President
Goomi Group



Karen Oxman, Executive VP
Hub International



Paul Watkins, JD, President&CEO
Dignity Health Northridge Medical
Center



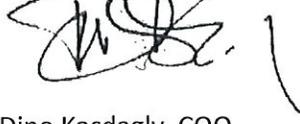
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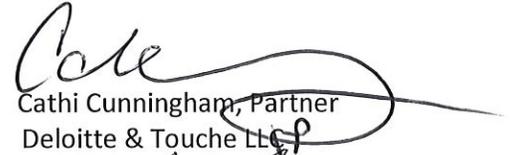
Ray Matthews, MD, Chief, Division
of Cardiovascular Medicine
Keck Medicine of USC



David P. Pryor, MD, Regional VP
Anthem Blue Cross



Paul Craig
Chief Administrative Officer
Keck Medicine of USC
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Deloitte & Touche LLP



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Hospital Association of Southern
California



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City National Bank



Ken Orkin, Chairman
ITG Automotive



Jessica Sims, MD, Region
Medical Director, Regal Medical
Group, Inc.

cc: Councilmember David Ryu
cc: Councilmember Curren Price, Jr.
cc: Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell
cc: City Clerk
cc: Eric Villanueva
cc: Andrew Choi