

Communication from Public

Name: LAYFTC

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Council File No: 18-1104

Comments for Public Posting: Please see attached letter on behalf of the Los Angeles LGBT Center regarding ending the sale of flavored tobacco. Thank you.



**LOS
ANGELES
LGBT
CENTER®**

Anita May Rosenstein Campus
1118 N. McCadden Place
Los Angeles, CA 90038

T: 323-993-7400
F: 323-308-4480

lalgbtcenter.org

Facebook: @lalgbtcenter
Twitter: @LALGBTCenter
Instagram: @lalgbtcenter

March 12, 2021

To: Honorable Members of City Council
200 North Spring Street, City Hall Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Honorable Members of City Council,

Since 1969, the Los Angeles LGBT Center (Center) has cared for, championed, and celebrated LGBT individuals and families in Los Angeles and beyond. We are an unstoppable force in the fight against bigotry and the struggle to build a better world; a world in which LGBT people are healthy, equal and complete members of society. Each month, the Center's 800 staff welcome more than 50,000 visits (more than half a million each year) from youth and adults who represent the full diversity of the LGBT community; people of all races, religions, genders, sexual orientations and ages—from the new-born child of an LGBT parent to seniors in their golden years.

The Center is committed to protecting the health and well-being of the youth and residents we serve in Los Angeles. As part of our mission, we support public health efforts to prevent tobacco-related disease and death and the growing epidemic of youth tobacco use initiation driven by flavored tobacco products. These products contain nicotine and can have damaging impact on the adolescent brain and cause long-term addiction.

The Los Angeles LGBT Center supports policies that restrict the sale of all flavored tobacco products including menthol and hookah tobacco. Eight out of ten youth tobacco users start vaping with a flavored tobacco product. Flavored tobacco is attributed to an 135% increase in youth tobacco use between 2017 and 2019. There is growing evidence that e-cigarette use increases the frequency and intensity of cigarette smoking in the future. Menthol cigarettes are frequently used by youth and priority populations. Over half of youth smokers use menthol cigarettes and the rate is much higher among African American youth. Furthermore, hookah use has become increasingly popular among high school students and doubled between 2011 and 2015.

We encourage the City of Los Angeles to follow the growing list of California cities that have restricted the sale of flavored tobacco products. Now is the time for Los Angeles to become a leader in saving lives by protecting residents from getting hooked on candy flavored tobacco products and a lifetime of nicotine addiction.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terra Russell-Slavin".

Terra Russell-Slavin
Director of Policy and Community Building
Los Angeles LGBT Center
(323) 860-5843