

Hi,

I'm writing to express serious concerns following today's City Council meeting regarding the proposed flavored tobacco and nicotine ban. Unfortunately, the meeting had significant issues, and I strongly urge you to vote against this ordinance for several reasons:

1. **Lack of Public Input:** Despite having provided public comments in previous meetings, we were not allowed to do so today. This led to a one-sided discussion where the council presented their points without community feedback or questions being addressed. This limits transparency and community engagement on such a critical issue.
2. **Inadequate Data:** The presentation today failed to provide sufficient data on the effects of similar bans in other states, such as California. There was no concrete evidence of either positive or negative impacts on public health or economic conditions in Kansas City or the surrounding areas. Informed decisions should be based on comprehensive data, which was lacking.
3. **Vape Market Decline:** Contrary to the claims made during the meeting, the vape industry is in decline. Despite this, the ban is being justified by an alleged increase in usage. This misinformation will lead to unintended consequences—consumers will likely go to neighboring cities outside Kansas City to purchase flavored tobacco products, harming local businesses.
4. **Inaccurate Financial Projections:** The city's projected loss in revenue ranges from \$1 million to \$6 million, a wide and uncertain gap. I disagree with these numbers, as the projections fail to consider that customers don't only purchase one product when they visit stores—they often buy multiple items, such as snacks and drinks. This will compound the economic harm to local businesses.
5. **Overreach into Adult Choices:** The council appears to be making decisions for adults regarding what they can and cannot smoke, which oversteps into personal freedoms. Despite being asked, no data was provided on where menthol smokers shift after bans. If this is supposed to be a comprehensive prohibition, why not ban all flavors? Singling out menthol is not effective, and history has shown that prohibition doesn't work.
6. **Clarification on Representation:** It was mentioned during the meeting that we are not sending messages. I want to make it clear that I am a local Kansas City retailer, and I have a direct stake in the outcome of this legislation. My business, FavTrip, is part of this community, and we are committed to being responsible retailers while also ensuring that adults have the right to make informed choices.
7. **Misleading Advertising Examples:** During the presentation, ads from the 1950s were used to portray tobacco company tactics. However, we are in 2024, and this is not reflective of the current regulatory environment, where marketing practices are much more tightly controlled. Using such outdated examples is misleading and does not accurately represent the present-day situation.

Today's meeting raised more questions than it answered. I strongly encourage you to oppose this ban.

Thanks,

Babir Sultan local retailer not a Robot I promise



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