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DIVERSE SET OF LAW ENFORCEMENT GROUPS CONCUR: STOP THE MENTHOL BAN

**Ahead of an Anticipated Ban on Menthol Tobacco Products,
More Than Three Dozen Bipartisan Organizations Demand the Administration Reverse Course**

MEDFORD, MA — Since the original posted date of [this letter](#), three law enforcement oriented organizations have added their signature: the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), The Guardians, and the National Latino Officers Association (NLOA). In addition, the letter continues to gain bipartisan traction with the National Newspaper Publisher Association and the Competitive Enterprise Institute joining, as well.

This letter should not be construed as an endorsement of smoking. Each signatory organization recognizes the well-documented, harmful effects it causes. This is a social justice issue because it's not just the use of drugs that is dangerous—as both Prohibition and the “War on Drugs” have shown us—the criminalization of a drug can have terrible consequences on both individuals and the communities in which they live.

“The idea that we should exclusively prohibit menthol flavored tobacco products—the preferred choice of Black smokers—disregards the history of friction between law enforcement and communities of color, and puts the lie to the idea that we think that criminalizing tobacco will end its use,” said Lt. Diane Goldstein (Ret.), current executive director of the [Law Enforcement Action Partnership](#). “Levels of trust in our justice system in general, and within Black and Brown communities in particular, are still rebounding from the historic lows we witnessed in 2020. Not only would this proposal cause us to lose a lot of the ground we’ve gained, if it actually worked, we’d be talking about banning all cigarette use right now. Why is it only communities of color to whom the FDA wants to extend this paternalizing ‘protection?’”

The Law Enforcement Action Partnership ([LEAP](#)) is a nonprofit group of police, judges, prosecutors, and other criminal justice professionals who use their expertise to advance public safety solutions. LEAP's nearly 200 law enforcement representatives from diverse backgrounds speak on behalf of thousands of law enforcement professionals across the U.S.

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The push to ban menthol cigarettes is marked by an attempt to criminalize personal health decisions. This proposed prohibition is unique in that it would disproportionately impact Black communities with law enforcement-first methods of intervention that directly correlate to an increase in negative police-civilian interactions within those communities—including an increased risk of escalation to violence or death—and a degradation of trust in policing as an institution. Conversely, because of evidence-based approaches that do not involve law enforcement, such as medically assisted interventions, public awareness campaigns, and tobacco-adjacent alternatives like vaping, we are currently experiencing the lowest rates of smoking in decades, and are seeing an increasing trend in people quitting without coercion.

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