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LAW ENFORCEMENT GROUP JOINS BIPARTISAN EFFORTS TO OPPOSE PROPOSED MENTHOL TOBACCO BAN

Citing Racial Justice and Community Impact Issues, the Law Enforcement Action Partnership Strongly Condemns the FDA’s Proposed Menthol Tobacco Ban

Washington, DC — On Tuesday, the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) released [a letter](#), joining more than two dozen drug policy, impacted-persons, law enforcement, and legal organizations, voicing their concerns about the Food and Drug Administration’s proposed rule to “ban menthol as a characterizing flavor in cigarettes,” which is anticipated to be published as soon as the end of the month. The letter highlights the historical lows in US smoking rates across demographics—regardless of product preference—while underscoring the need for continued investment in the evidence-based solutions, medically assisted interventions, and public awareness campaigns that led to these lows.

“FDA isn’t going to be involved in policing this new rule; they aren’t the ones tasked with enforcement, so they don’t understand how these policies lead directly to the erosion of community trust in law enforcement, which leads to an increase in crime rates, not just in the areas that need our support the most, but in surrounding areas, as well,” said Lt. Diane Goldstein, current executive director of LEAP. “This is a continuation of the failed enforcement-first tactics we see all the time in the ‘War on Drugs.’ Interdiction, arrest, and prosecution do not work to resolve matters of public health.”

Research shows that 85% of all Black smokers choose menthol tobacco. When police are charged with enforcing low-level offenses such as the sale or use of menthol cigarettes, and the sale of loose cigarettes, the community stops trusting the police altogether, viewing law enforcement officers as an enemy rather than protectors and stakeholders of the community.

LEAP opposes the proposed rule based on its potential impacts on police-community trust, mass incarceration, and the downstream effects these policies have on both individuals and communities.

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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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