

From: [Chris Bostic](#)
To: [Megan Arendt](#)
Subject: FW: ***Spam*** Menthol Win is Official!
Date: Thursday, April 29, 2021 1:04:50 PM

From: The Center for Black Health & Equity <info@centerforblackhealth.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 29, 2021 1:03 PM
To: Chris Bostic <bosticc@ash.org>
Subject: ***Spam*** Menthol Win is Official!

April 2021

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The Center for Black Health & Equity Celebrates Hard-Fought Menthol Win

Prohibiting the sale of menthol cigarettes is one of the most powerful steps the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) could have taken to improve America's health. It was long overdue for the agency, given its existing authority under the 2009 Tobacco Control Act, and its own scientific findings on the dangers of menthol. The delay in action has caused significant loss of life and damage to health in the African American community, and [we enthusiastically applaud the FDA's call to ban menthol.](#)

Tobacco-related illness is the leading cause of death for African Americans. After decades of tobacco industry targeting, more than 85% of African American smokers prefer menthols, compared to 30% of Caucasian smokers. The science has been clear for many years – menthol makes it easier to start smoking and harder to quit. African American smokers consistently report more quit attempts than the general population, and yet experience lower success rates. To this day, the tobacco industry continues to funnel menthol marketing and discounts to African American communities, appropriate African American culture, and create a dependency on tobacco funding. No more.

We want to make sure that a ban on the sale of menthol cigarettes includes two items. First, a commitment from the Biden administration that the FDA will be given robust resources to help smokers quit in the communities that

have been targeted for so long. Second, that federal and state enforcement focuses on the tobacco industry and its sales practices, and the prevention of black markets. We do not want to see law enforcement use this ban as an excuse to increase interactions with the Black community. The industry has used the threat of black markets scare tactic to prevent regulation for decades, and in some parts of the world has participated in them. This is not a reason to allow them to continue to prey on Black communities. We applaud the federal commitment to policing the retail and manufacturing of these harmful products and not the possession of them. Change can be difficult, but the FDA has made the right decision, and that decision must be supported with policies and funding that ensure success.

We applaud the states and dozens of municipalities that have taken action to successfully enact local restrictions on the sale of menthol cigarettes. While we welcome FDA action on menthol on the federal level, we will continue to urge and support local action to effect change around the country. An FDA decision will not remove menthol from the marketplace immediately, and the tobacco industry will make every effort to stop or delay a ban. Local action on tobacco will continue to be critical to public health.

Our organizations have encouraged the FDA to act on menthol for many years. For some of us, that work was happening even before the Tobacco Control Act was passed. We are extremely happy that the FDA has made the just and equitable decision to ban the sale of menthol cigarettes, but we will remember that the failure to act earlier has had serious consequences in underrepresented communities that could least afford them.

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