THE CASE AGAINST MENTHOL CIGARETTES

GET THE FACTS

- African Americans die disproportionately from tobacco related diseases compared to other racial and ethnic groups. A key factor promoting this disparity is African Americans use of menthol tobacco products.

- Menthol masks the harsh taste of smoking cigarettes and other tobacco products, thereby making it easier for kids to start smoking.

- Menthol allows the poison of nicotine and tobacco toxins to go down easier.

- Menthol reduces irritation, thus increasing the amount of smoke that is inhaled and allowing the smoker to inhale deeper and longer.

- Inhaling more smoke means greater nicotine intake, making menthol and other flavored tobacco products more addictive and harder to quit.

- Melanin is the substance that gives color to our skin; nicotine is stored in tissues that contain melanin; therefore, the darker your skin means that more nicotine is stored in your body.

- African Americans have been especially targeted by the tobacco industry for over 50 years; this predatory marketing takes the form of:
  - More advertisements of menthol products
  - More lucrative promotions; i.e., more giveaways, coupons, and discounts than in other communities
  - Across the nation, menthol cigarettes are cheaper in Black Communities than in more affluent neighborhoods
  - More tobacco retail outlets
  - Greater marketing of flavored little cigars
  - Corporate sponsorships, campaign contributions to elected officials, and donations to many social, religious, fraternal, and civic black organizations

AATCLC

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- This predatory marketing led to the steady and alarming rise in the use of menthol cigarettes among African American adults:
  - 1953 – 5% | 1968 – 14% | 1976 – 42% | 2006 – 82% | 2011 – 85%

- Newports and other menthol cigarettes are not a Black cigarette. It is the discriminatory practices of the tobacco industry, pushing these products down our throats is why some many Black folks smoke these products.

- And prohibiting the sale of these products will not lead to arresting young Black men and women for possession. It would still be legal to possess these products; however, retailor would not be able to sale them, period.

- Menthols are starter products for all youth; numerous research studies show that youth prefer menthol and other candy flavored nicotine products.

- Among African American adolescent smokers, 95% smoke menthol cigarettes and other flavored tobacco products.

- Nicotine is easily delivered to the developing adolescent brain, impairing judgment and decision-making functions and increasing addiction.

- It's not just about menthol cigarettes; it's also about menthol and other flavored tobacco products such as the little cigars, cigarillos, and blunt wrappers

- Compared to other racial and ethnic groups, African Americans disproportionately use the above-mentioned products; 50% higher than other groups.

- Making flavored tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes, less accessible to our youth will prevent many from starting to smoke, and thus improve the health of the African American Community.

- Hence, menthol and all flavored tobacco products, including e-juices should be removed from the marketplace. Cities should enact city-wide ordinances to restrict the sale of these products.