



January 22, 2024

Testimony of Laura Hale
American Heart Association
Support for the Bill to Eliminate Tobacco Use in Baltimore City Stadium

Dear Honorable Council Members,

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important legislation for heart health. My name is Laura Hale and I am the Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association. The American Heart Association extends its support for the bill that would eliminate tobacco use in Oriole Park at Camden Yards.

The American Heart Association is committed to making a world of longer healthier lives. Part of a world of longer healthier lives is people never starting to consume tobacco.

Baseball Players are role models:

Baseball, America's national pastime, should symbolize a healthy and active lifestyle, not promote an addictive and harmful product. The use of smokeless tobacco by Major League Baseball players sets a damaging example for the millions of young fans. These young admirers often see their sports idols as role models and are likely to mimic their habits, including tobacco use.

Cutting the feet from under a growing trend that is hurting our kids:

Smokeless tobacco, often flavored to appeal to a younger audience, contains at least 28 cancer-causing chemicals, leading to diseases like oral, pancreatic, and esophageal cancer. Nicotine addiction is a significant risk, especially among impressionable youth.

Standing for our kids against the Tobacco Industry's targeting:

The tobacco industry has historically targeted the younger demographic by introducing flavored products, including smokeless tobacco and e-cigarettes. This strategy, combined with using athletes and sports imagery in advertising, significantly influences youth, encouraging the initiation of tobacco use.

Baltimore has the opportunity to promote a healthy, tobacco-free environment in sports. By passing this bill, we can protect our children, set a positive example, and contribute to a tobacco-free future in baseball and beyond. Let's make a stand for the health of our players and the well-being of our kids.

The American Heart Association urges a favorable report on this legislation.