



Councilwoman Danielle McCray
Chair, Health, Environment, and Technology Committee
100 Holliday Street
Room 525
Baltimore, MD 21202
Danielle.mccray@baltimorecity.gov

January 24, 2024

RE: Council Bill 23-0418 – Tobacco Product Use in Stadiums – Prohibition

Dear Councilwoman McCray:

On behalf of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, I am writing to express our strong support for Council Bill 23-0418 – Tobacco Product Use in Stadiums – Prohibition. We are grateful for Councilman Burnett's leadership in sponsoring this bill as well as its co-sponsors. We are also thankful to have the support of several public health organizations, the Baltimore Orioles, and many others in the interest of moving this important public health initiative forward.

Each day, more than 1,000 kids use smokeless tobacco for the first time. These products come in kid-friendly flavors like mint/menthol, berry and other fruits. The latest data (2021) shows that over 70% of you smokeless tobacco users use flavored products. We have worked with other cities around the country to pass similar policies to take tobacco out of stadiums for good. We know that kids look up to their sports heroes and often model their behavior. By prohibiting the use of all tobacco products in stadiums, we fill an important gap that current exists today in Baltimore at Camden Yards.

We are thankful that the Baltimore Orioles have taken the initiative to prohibit these products in their venues including their training facilities since we brought this issue to them in 2023. And we are especially thankful that the team stands in solidarity with public health advocates, parents, teachers, and health professionals to ensure that smokeless tobacco does not have a place in baseball. In January 2016, San Francisco's AT&T Park became the first stadium to become a tobacco-free. Although recent agreements between Major League Baseball (MLB) and the Major League Baseball Player's Association have made significant strides towards limiting smokeless tobacco use in the game, too many players can still use tobacco on the field in too many stadiums across the country. While 16 MLB teams play in cities that have similar policies in place, we must keep moving these policies forward until the connection between tobacco and baseball is ended for good.

Smokeless tobacco contains at least 28 cancer-causing chemicals. It causes oral, pancreatic, and esophageal cancer (and more), and often leads to nicotine addiction. Whether it's flavored tobacco products, flavored e-cigarettes or menthol cigarettes, the tobacco industry has long used flavored tobacco products to attract and addict kids. We have seen Big Tobacco use advertising, images and testimonials featuring athletes and sports to make smokeless and other tobacco products appear attractive to youth.

It's simply time to "Knock Tobacco Out of the Park." We truly appreciate your time and consideration on this matter, and respectfully request a favorable vote on Council Bill 23-0418 – Tobacco Product Use in Stadiums – Prohibition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. O'Flaherty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Kevin O'Flaherty
Campaign Director, Knock Tobacco Out of the Park
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids