

**Dear Members of the Public Health Committee of Connecticut General Assembly**

**My name is Councilman TJ Clarke II, and I am from Hartford, CT. I am a member of Court of Common Council in Hartford where I serve as the Majority Leader. I am here to express my support in favor of bill S.B. No. 326 (RAISED) AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE OF FLAVORED CIGARETTES, TOBACCO PRODUCTS, ELECTRONIC NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND VAPOR PRODUCTS.**

**I would like to make you aware of the tobacco related issues associated with COVID-19 and unhealthy lungs that are affecting many communities in our state while we continue to live in this pandemic.**

**Emerging studies suggest that COVID-19 patients who smoke have a higher chance of experiencing severe symptoms or death than non-smokers because smoking often leads to severe respiratory afflictions and is detrimental to the immune system.**

**COVID-19 makes clear that our lung health is so tied to our public health and how we're going to get back on our feet in this country to build back better for our collective future.**

**Stand with me for policies that will, during and after COVID-19, make our communities stronger and healthier. Believe in the promise of the next generation.**

**In recent years, 4,900 adults in our state have died each year from their own smoking in CT. When the medical data all come out from COVID-19, how many of the more than 7,000 deaths in Connecticut will show some association with smoking?**

**We need to prohibit the sale of all flavored tobacco products now -- at a time when COVID-19 has disproportionately devastated the lungs and lives of communities of color.**

**Thank you for your time.**

**Respectfully,**

**TJ Clarke II  
Majority Leader  
Hartford Court of Common Council**