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TO: The Honorable Thomas Mac Middleton, Chair  
Members, Senate Finance Committee  
The Honorable Victor Ramirez

FROM: Joseph A. Schwartz, III  
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: March 5, 2014

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 898 – *Tobacco Products – Unpackaged Cigars and Flavored Other Tobacco Products - Restrictions*

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On behalf of MedChi, the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP), we support Senate Bill 898.

Senate Bill 898 prohibits the purchase, sale, and distribution of unpackaged cigars and flavored other tobacco products in Maryland. In 2009, the federal Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act prohibited the manufacturing, marketing, and sale of flavored cigarettes. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), despite a federal ban on the manufacture or sale of flavored cigarettes, flavored little cigars and other tobacco products are still manufactured and sold with candy and fruit flavorings. Many appear virtually indistinguishable from cigarettes with similar sizes, shapes, filters, and packaging. Sales of little cigars increased 240% from 1997 to 2007 with flavored brands making up almost 80% of market share. Although federal law does not regulate flavored non-cigarette tobacco products, it does not prevent state and local governments from regulating the sale of these products or their component parts.

According to the 2011 National Youth Tobacco Study, more than 40% of middle and high school students who smoke prefer flavored little cigars and flavored cigarettes. Among youth cigar smokers, almost 60% of those who smoke flavored little cigars are not thinking about quitting tobacco use. According to CDC, little cigars – flavored or not – contain the same toxic and cancer-causing ingredients found in cigarettes. They may also cause heart disease, lung disease, and many other health problems.

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Maryland has been a leader in the fight to reduce smoking and the use of tobacco products. Essential to that effort are aggressive measures to reduce minors' access to and use of tobacco products. The flavored products covered by Senate Bill 898 are the products most attractive to minors and utilized in Maryland. It makes sense to ban those products for sale in the State if we are to remain consistent with our objective to reduce, if not eliminate, the use of tobacco products. A favorable report is requested.

**For more information call:**

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