



*The Maryland State Medical Society*

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Additional Information Contact:

Gene M. Ransom, CEO

Office: 410-539-0872 x 3305

## **RESPONSE TO SENATE CANDIDATE, JULIUS HENSON, STATEMENT ON TOBACCO TAX**

BALTIMORE, June 13, 2014 — In a statement released yesterday District 45 Senate Candidate Julius Henson stated he was opposed to tobacco taxes stating he didn't think "any additional tobacco taxes should be levied against the manufacturers of cigarettes or stores that sell them. In addition, Mr. Henson says there is no evidence that higher cigarette prices deter people from smoking."

Mr. Henson is simply wrong. Over the past decade, Maryland's smoking rate has declined by 32%, double the national average, saving over 70,000 people from preventable tobacco caused deaths and hundreds of millions of dollars in health care costs, in large part as a result of three tobacco tax increases.

While we realize Mr. Henson is simply trying to court the support of the tobacco industry and their strong lobby, the person he is challenging has taken a better approach. Senator McFadden has voted for measures that put reasonable taxes on tobacco. Senator McFadden has fought to put those resources from tobacco tax to fund critical life-saving health care and public health programs such as Medicaid, the state tobacco control program, the state health improvement process and other community based health initiatives including those that address childhood obesity and long term care for seniors. MedChi strongly supports Senator McFadden's approach over that of the tobacco industry and Mr. Hensen.

### About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. Formed in 1799, it is still the largest physician organization in Maryland today. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit [www.medchi.org](http://www.medchi.org).