

Hello my name is Safiya and I am from Burlington, Vermont. I am an advocate in ATI BTV.

Above the Influence is a youth substance abuse prevention leadership group. We are concerned about flavored tobacco and the epidemic of youth flavored tobacco use. We are a diverse group and we are committed to making sure that all voices are heard and all people are protected. That is why we really focused on menthol flavoring. Big Tobacco targets minority communities and youth with menthol products. These are some groups with the least power and voice in our society. Menthol is the only flavoring still allowed in cigarettes and is frequently left out in discussions about flavor bans. We are here to speak out against this injustice.

We created a campaign called Our Lives Our Lungs to raise awareness about these issues. We were inspired by the documentary and campaign Black Lives Black Lungs. The Black Lives Black Lungs campaign is all about raising awareness of “the tobacco industry’s successful infiltration into the black community.” The Our Lives Our Lungs campaign we created raises awareness about Big Tobacco’s intentional targeting of both minority communities and youth. This intentional targeting threatens all of the most important parts of our lives - our friends, our family members, our community, and our futures. We feel a responsibility to educate and inform our peers and community members about the harm menthol does.

We are here to ask you to take ALL flavored tobacco seriously and protect our peers and our community.

I am personally here because flavored tobacco has had a huge impact on my life. My friends and family members are using flavored tobacco and they started using it because they were unaware they would be harming their bodies. My uncle and father are immigrants and they both used flavored tobacco at a point in their lives. They didn’t have the opportunity to get the education about the harms of tobacco that I received and they were profiled and lied to by the tobacco industry. My uncle now has cancer. The next speaker from our group will tell you more about that and you will hear from other group members who will share about what we see in our school. Our peers are being targeted and not fully thinking of the future impacts of nicotine addiction.

Shamura Awayle  
1-20-20

Tobacco companies have strategically marketed tobacco products to minority communities for decades.

The most striking example is menthol cigarettes. The use of menthol in cigarettes has made it easier to smoke and harder to quit.

Menthol cigarettes have long been marketed to black communities. There are more tobacco retailers in areas with larger black, multicultural, and low-income communities. Big Tobacco has sponsored college scholarship programs and cultural events, and has placed advertising in public places that are popular with minority groups. These are all intentional efforts to forge ties with the African American community and build a misleading positive brand.

94.9% of African American youth smokers use menthol cigarettes. There are 10 times more tobacco ads in African American neighborhoods than there are in other neighborhoods.

And those numbers are no mistake.

Big Tobacco has fed off of addiction for decades and has taken the lives of so many in our community. And all for what? Money!

What about the lives of youth and adults in future generations?

There is not enough money in the world the tobacco industry can give back to these struggling communities to make up for the lives they have taken.

As youth under the age of 18, we shouldn't have to be here asking for help to protect our lives and the lives of the people we love. That is a basic privilege we deserve. We should have been protected before the epidemic began. But statistics show that it's very imperative that we are here today asking you to do all you can do.

Willas

Cyrus

Sophia

Nathan

NOE

Madison

Ehlanla

SOE

Kai DT

Mikhaayla

Kris

Harri

Harri

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# Our LIVES Our LUNGS

END  
FLAVORED  
TOBACCO



KASINO

Natalie

Tatiana

Michael

Cody

Chenah

Lucy!

Calder

Fisher

Miranda

Lindsay

Katrine

Shaniqua

Odessa

Lindsey

Michael

Cody

Chenah

Lucy!

Calder

Fisher

Miranda

Lindsay

Katrine

Haiman

Sully

Micky

Nico

Jonathan

Jonathan

Jonathan

Jonathan

Jonathan

Jonathan

Jonathan

Jonathan

Jonathan

Habiba

Audrey

used

Jasmine

Alma

Alma

Alma

Alma

Alma

Alma

Alma

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Sana

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Flavored tobacco is used to target my friends, family, and peers. People are not talking enough about the role flavored tobacco, especially menthol, plays in nicotine addiction and people need to know the problems it causes.

Amina Ibrahim  
age 14

#OurLivesOurLungs  
 ati.btv



**END  
MENTHOL  
TOBACCO**



In high school,  
everybody wants to fit  
in and do what  
everybody else is doing.  
I want to be that voice  
who makes a new  
healthy trend and  
speaks out for the  
unspoken.

Ayan Mohamed  
age 16

#OurLivesOurLungs



**END**  
**MENTHOL**  
**TOBACCO**



**TWO-THIRDS OF  
TOBACCO-USING YOUTH**

**report using non-  
cigarette tobacco  
products like e-  
cigarettes, cigars, and  
chew because they  
like the flavors.**

**~CounterBalanceVT**

**#OurLivesOurLungs**

 **ati.btv**



Nationwide, more than half (53.6%) of youth who smoke cigarettes report using menthol flavored cigarettes—the only kind of flavored cigarette that's still legal.

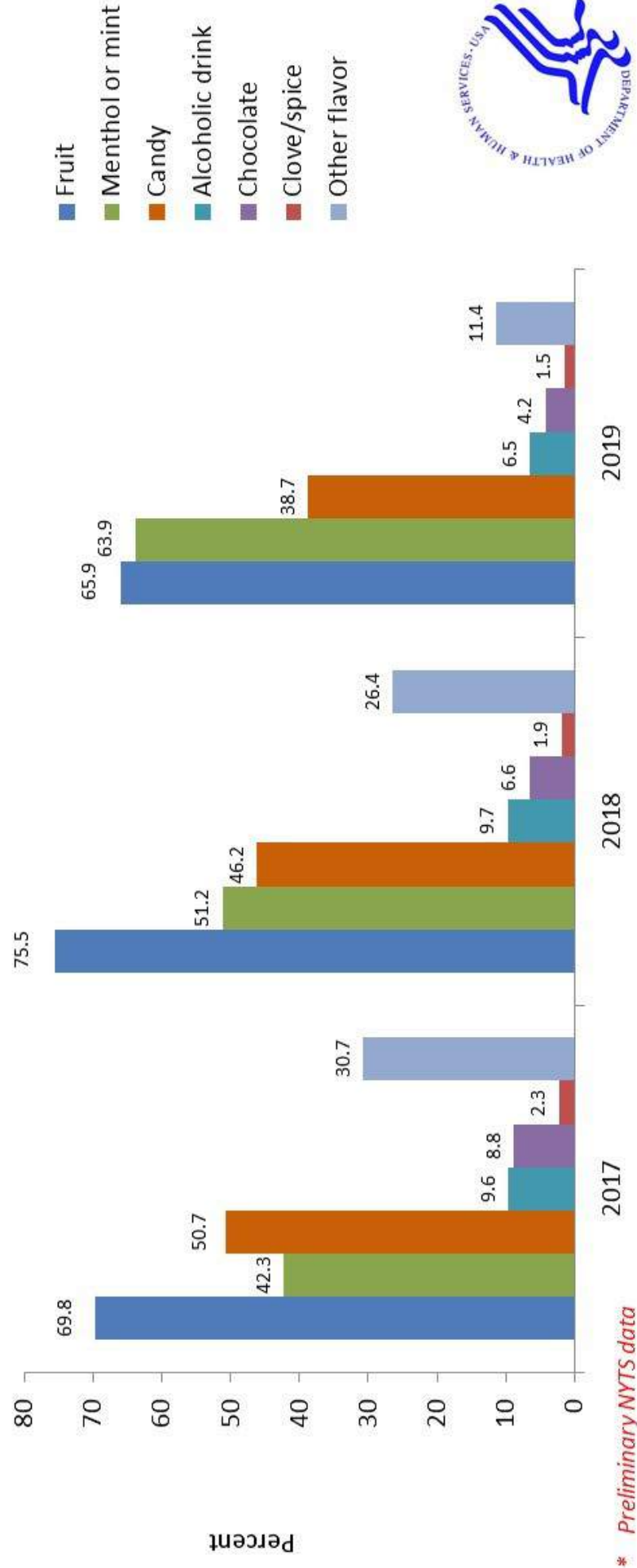
~CounterBalance VT

#OurLivesOurLungs

 ati.btv



# FLAVORS POPULAR AMONG HIGH SCHOOL USERS OF E-CIGARETTES\*



# Are you a target?

Big Tobacco has **targeted youth and minority communities** for decades with menthol and other flavored tobacco products.



We don't smoke that s \* \* \* \*. We just sell it. We reserve the right to smoke for the young, the poor, the black and stupid."

– R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company Executive

Refuse to be a target! Use #OurLivesOurLungs to take a stand:



# **Stop**

*by Balkisa Omar and Hawa Adam*

Are you black?

Live near a convenience store or live in a low income neighborhood?

Well, we've got just the thing for you..

Nicotine

For all those nigga teens.

Yes, brothers

Yes, sisters

With a little puff of mint or vanilla you will be the coolest kid on the block.

And if it's not 100% satisfaction guaranteed.. you don't get your life back.

Yes brothers, yes sisters this stuff kills.

Big Tobacco has been in the african american community for decades - our homes, our schools.

It's not a coincidence.

Ronald Reagan brought crack into the hood. But look at us. Clearly black don't crack.

But our ghettos aren't for everyone no free trial no rerun our men ain't no guinea pigs for addiction without refund.

Stop profiling us.

Stop using us.

Stop.