



*Mothers of the Movement*  
*P.O. Box 552252 Miami Gardens, FL 33055*  
*Motherofthemovement@gmail.com*

October 11, 2019

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone:

We appreciate your focus on reviewing the health effects of tobacco and e-cigarettes in young people. We urge you to pay very close attention to the unintended effects of a ban on menthol cigarettes and what it would mean in the Urban community.

We both strive hard to do our best and set examples in our community amongst the black youth. Our focus is within various cities throughout the country. We have witnessed encounters with law enforcement and negative policing which has been spread throughout our community.

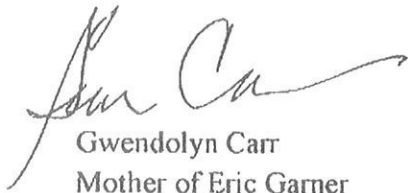
H.R. 2339, the Reversing the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act, contains a provision that bans menthol cigarettes. We are concerned of the rising numbers of Black Americans who prefer menthol cigarettes. We are alarmed that 80% Black Americans in Urban communities invest in purchasing of these good. As a result of this ban, we recognize the effects which may happen within the Urban community and the justice system.

We do not encourage, support, or promote smoking especially in our Urban communities. We are concerned that this ban in many cases will reintroduce another version of stop-and-frisk in black low socio-economic communities. We experience and are forced to tolerate aggressive behaviors from law enforcement. This is our reality and is displayed throughout different levels of government, locally and nationally daily. This ban will introduce or replay many hard to employ young black Americans to the criminal justice system. We do not want to take parents, sons, and daughters out of households for small infractions that carry financial obligations. We ask that, at the same time you consider health issues, you look carefully at the criminal justice impact of such a change in health policy. Our community has had plenty of experience living under laws passed with the best of intentions. Under your bill, cigarettes preferred by African-Americans would be illegal; cigarettes preferred by non-African-Americans would be legal.

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
October 11, 2019  
Page 2

Small violations can quickly escalate to consequential events. We refuse to witness another mother join us in death of a loved one because of readily available products and decisions available in our Black communities.

Best Regards,



Gwendolyn Carr  
Mother of Eric Garner



Sybrina Fulton  
Mother of Trayvon Martin

cc: Speaker Pelosi  
Majority Leader Hoyer  
Majority Whip Clyburn  
All Congressional Black Caucus members  
All Congressional Hispanic Caucus members  
New York congressional delegation  
Florida congressional delegation