



National Black Nurses Association, Inc.  
8630 Fenton Street, Suite 910, Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Phone: (301) 589-3200 • Fax: (301) 589-3223

---

**President**

*Dr. Sheldon D. Fields*

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President**

*Dr. Shirley Evers-Manly*

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**

*Dr. Marcia Lowe*

**Secretary**

*Dr. Leonora Muhammad*

**Treasurer**

*Rev. Dr. Evelyn Collier-Dixon*

**Immediate Past President**

*Dr. Martha A. Dawson*

**Historian**

*J'Adore Larosa-Mattis*

**Parliamentarian**

*Dr. Michelle Y. Williams*

**Student Representative**

*Mamadi Kromah*

**Ex-Officio**

*Dr. C. Alicia Georges*

**Board Members**

*Kim Cartwright*

*Dr. Marie Etienne*

*Dr. Julius Johnson*

*Dr. Marilyn Johnson*

*Dr. Mary Kelly*

*Courtney J. Marbley*

*Dr. Angelo Moore*

*Dr. Stephanie Patterson*

*Dr. Katherine Tucker*

**Interim Executive Director**

*Dr. Vivienne McDaniel*

December 13, 2023

Coalition Letter on Final FY24 Appropriations Bills

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Vice Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Murray, Chairwoman Granger, Vice Chair Collins, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you develop final appropriations bills for FY 2024, we urge you to ensure that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) retains its full authority to oversee tobacco products and that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) receives necessary resources to protect kids from tobacco products and reduce tobacco-related disease.<sup>1</sup>

Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death in the U.S., responsible for 480,000 deaths and \$241 billion in health care costs each year. Preventing youth from starting to use tobacco products and helping adults who use tobacco to quit improves health, saves lives, and reduces the financial burden that tobacco use imposes on families, employers, and governments. But provisions in House appropriations bills would undercut efforts by FDA and CDC to reduce tobacco use.

The House Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill would prevent FDA from issuing rules that would remove menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars from the market and reduce nicotine levels in cigarettes. Together, these rules will prevent millions of young people from using tobacco regularly and save millions of lives over time. When added to cigarettes, menthol reduces the harshness of tobacco smoke, which makes it easier for youth to start smoking, and interacts with nicotine to make menthol cigarettes more addictive and harder to quit. Flavored cigars increase the appeal of cigars and make them easier to smoke, especially for youth. And

---

<sup>1</sup> References to tobacco in this letter refer to commercial tobacco and not ceremonial tobacco which is used by some American Indian communities.

reducing nicotine levels in cigarettes to non-addictive or minimally addictive levels would help people who smoke to quit and help prevent another generation of youth from experiencing the serious health consequences of smoking. FDA should be allowed to use the oversight authority it was given under the 2009 Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, follow the science, and implement these rules to protect the public's health.

The House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill would also eliminate funding for CDC's Office on Smoking and Health. Under the House bill, CDC would no longer be able to provide funding to states to implement evidence-based programs to prevent youth use of e-cigarettes and other tobacco products. States would no longer receive federal support for state quitlines, which help people who use tobacco to quit. And CDC would not have the resources to continue its highly effective national public awareness campaign, *Tips from Former Smokers*,<sup>®</sup> which helped approximately one million people who smoke to quit, prevented 129,100 smoking-related deaths, and saved an estimated \$7.3 billion in health care costs from 2012 through 2018.

In contrast to the House bills, the Senate's appropriations bills have received bipartisan support and do not include provisions that would restrict FDA's ability to oversee tobacco products or cut current funding levels for CDC's Office on Smoking and Health. As you work to finalize appropriations bills for fiscal year 2024, we urge you to not include provisions that would prevent FDA from moving forward with rules on menthol cigarettes, flavored cigars, and reduced nicotine levels in cigarettes and to ensure that CDC's Office on Smoking and Health at a minimum maintains current funding levels.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sheldon D. Fields". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sheldon D. Fields, PhD, RN, FNP-BC, CRNP, AACRN, FAANP, FNAP, FAAN  
President, National Black Nurses Association