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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES CITY ACTION AGAINST RESTRAINING ORDER FILED BY
LOCAL TOBACCO INDUSTRY VENDORS**

City defends law that protects youth from the sale of flavored tobacco near schools

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced that he will aggressively fight two temporary restraining orders newly filed by local tobacco industry vendors against a city ordinance passed last year prohibiting the sale of flavored tobacco within 500 feet of a school. The temporary restraining order motion will be argued in Federal Court on Tuesday.

The City of Chicago maintains that the law is constitutional, and necessary to protect the children of Chicago. A number of national health organizations, including the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, have vowed to file legal briefs in support of the City.

"The tobacco industry has spent decades developing products and designing marketing campaigns that appeal to young people in the hopes of creating lifelong customers," said Mayor Emanuel. "We will fight Big Tobacco in the courtroom, if that is what it takes to keep our children healthy.

The density of tobacco retail around schools has been shown to have a significant impact on the prevalence of youth experimenting with tobacco, and flavored tobacco products are a key tool used by Big Tobacco to hook kids on tobacco products. The ordinance is in place to reduce access to flavored cigarettes, which are all too often a kid's first encounter with tobacco.

Chicago has recently passed a number of leading anti-tobacco laws. Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease and death in Chicago and the nation. Tobacco kills more people than murders, suicide, illegal drugs, alcohol, AIDS and car crashes combined. Lifetime smoking and other tobacco use almost always begin before children graduate from high school. Ninety percent of adult smokers started by age 18.

Earlier this year, the CDC reported that only 10.7 percent of high schools reported smoking in 2013 – a record low and down from 13.6 percent in 2011.

"The best way to lower youth smoking rates is to help make sure kids never pick up their first cigarette," said Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Bechara Choucair, MD. "Studies show children are more likely to start smoking using flavored products, so by making it harder for them to access those products we will help keep more kids from ever lighting their first cigarette."

Flavored tobacco products are often sold in colorful packaging and sweet flavors near the candy displays, and are sold individually or in two packs making them more affordable than a candy bar or an ice cream cone. Electronic smoking devices have flavors such as gummy bear, cotton candy and bubble gum.

Menthol-flavored cigarettes in particular have slowed efforts to reduce youth smoking. Children aged 12-17 smoke menthol-flavored products more than any other group. The FDA has confirmed that menthol cigarettes are more addictive and harder to quit than unflavored cigarettes. A disproportionate number of tobacco related deaths occur in minority communities, but Big Tobacco continues to advertise dangerous menthol-flavored products to minority youth, and research shows they also lower their prices for menthol-flavored cigarettes near schools where African-American students attend.

“The use of menthol flavored cigarettes is highest among young African American and LGBT youth,” said Phoenix Matthews, PHD, Associate Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago. “This is about fighting for all of the City’s youth, so that they can live long healthy lives.”

“We applaud Mayor Emanuel’s bold efforts to protect children from the harmful use of flavored tobacco and his commitment to continue this fight,” said Carol McGruder, Co-Chair of the African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council. “His initiatives have been influential across the country to get similar legislation discussed in other jurisdictions.”

Recently, CDPH was awarded Health Department of the year by the National Association of County and City Health Officials, and one of the reasons was specifically for this ordinance and the city’s aggressive anti-tobacco stance. Last year, Mayor Emanuel was awarded the Visionary Elected Leader Award from the African American Tobacco Leadership Council (AATCLC) for his efforts to curb the use of flavored tobacco products and e-cigarettes among Chicago’s youth. The national organization presented the award to Mayor Emanuel for introducing this City ordinance that the local tobacco vendors are now fighting.

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