File #: 170410, **Version:** 0

Authorizing the joint City Council Committees on Public Safety and Children and Youth to hold hearings reviewing the impact of flavored tobacco products, such as "Hood Wraps" or "Four K's," on the youth of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, The human and economic costs associated with the use of tobacco in Philadelphia are devastating. According to the CDC, tobacco is the cause of death to more than 3,500 City residents annually. Additionally, the medical costs alone to treat illnesses caused by smoking in Philadelphia exceeds $840 million; and

WHEREAS, Each day in the United States, nearly 2,500 youth under 18 years of age smoke their first cigarette. In 2015, 28% of Philadelphia youths used some form of tobacco product, including cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco and electronic vapor products. Because of this, many of these youths will become addicted before they are old enough to understand the severe health risks associated with the use of these products; and

WHEREAS, The tobacco industry continuously relies on predatory marketing strategies in low income and minority communities in order to convert youths into cigarette smokers at a very young age. Cheap candy, fruit, and menthol flavored cigarillos are often packaged and placed next to youth-orientated products that entice children to start smoking. A 2013 study found that stores in majority African-American communities in Philadelphia were 74% more likely to have tobacco advertisements near children's products; and

WHEREAS, Cigars and cigarillos are the second most common form of tobacco used by high school students. A recent study found that more than 87% of adolescents who used cigarillos in the past 30 days used flavored cigarillos. Flavored tobacco products, such as "Hood Wraps" or "Four K's" are "starter" products that help new users establish daily habits and promote addiction to tobacco products, making it harder to quit, and may result in the concurrent use of multiple tobacco products; and

WHEREAS, When asked, 73.8% of current youth cigar smokers said they smoked cigars because they came in flavors that they liked. A recent study found that flavored tobacco products, such as sweet-flavored cigars, are being engineered with the same flavor chemicals used in popular candy products like LifeSavers and Jolly Ranchers, providing a "familiar, chemical-specific flavor cue" to the user; and

WHEREAS, Low income communities in Philadelphia contain 69% more tobacco retailers than higher income communities, including North Philadelphia, which has more than three times as many tobacco retailers per capita as the far Northeast. Teenagers in neighborhoods saturated with tobacco retailers are more likely to start smoking at an earlier age; and

WHEREAS, Hundreds of tobacco retailers in Philadelphia have been cited for selling tobacco products to children, including flavored cigars and cigarillos. In 2015 alone, 23% of the tobacco retailers in Philadelphia were non-compliant and sold to under-age teens. This is much higher than the state rate for non-compliance of 11%; and

WHEREAS, The effects of flavored tobacco use on the health of the City's youth must be examined to protect

and ensure that our youth are not at risk of significant harm; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the joint City Council Committees on Public Safety and Children and Youth are hereby authorized to hold public hearings reviewing the impact of flavored tobacco on the health of youth in Philadelphia.

powered by Legistar™