



Statement in Response to Rancho Cordova Police Officer's Excessive Force on 14-year-old Black Boy

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LOS ANGELES – Following the release of a viral video that shows a Rancho Cordova police officer brutally attacking an African-American boy over a cigarillo, **the African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council Co-Chairs Dr. Phillip Gardiner and Carol McGruder issued the following statement:**

“For decades, two things have taken far too many lives and inflicted insurmountable harm in Black communities: police violence and tobacco. In light of this latest incident, the answer is not to shy back from policies that keep our communities safe and healthy, the answer is to hold those who abuse and harm our communities accountable – that includes Big Tobacco.

The two-fold rise in use of flavored tobacco cigars by young people across this country has made a boy a victim twice over. The time is now to put an end to police violence and brutality in our communities, and cut tobacco’s stronghold over young people to prevent a new generation of smokers from emerging.”

BACKGROUND:

Flavored tobacco products, like Swisher Sweet Cigars, have fueled the popularity of cigars, e-cigarettes, and cigarettes and among youth. Swisher Sweets come in a huge variety of flavors such as tropical fusion, Maui pineapple, twisted berry, cherry dynamite and banana smash. Today, 73.8% of youth cigar users cite flavors as a major reason for their current use, saying they used the product “because they come in flavors I like.”

Furthermore, more than half of youth cigarette smokers – including 7 out of 10 African American youth cigarette smokers – smoke menthol cigarettes – the tobacco industry’s number one flavor.

As a consequence, African Americans suffer high rates of tobacco-related diseases such as lung cancer, heart disease, and stroke. The evidence shows that candy flavored tobacco, including menthol makes it easier for kids to start smoking and harder for smokers to quit.

This Friday the comprehensive ban on the sale of flavored tobacco and menthol will go into effect in unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. Notably, the City of LA has been considering a similar measure since last winter, but has yet to act.