

Pick Your Poison

April 21, 2021

Are cigarettes containing menthol-flavored tobacco racist?

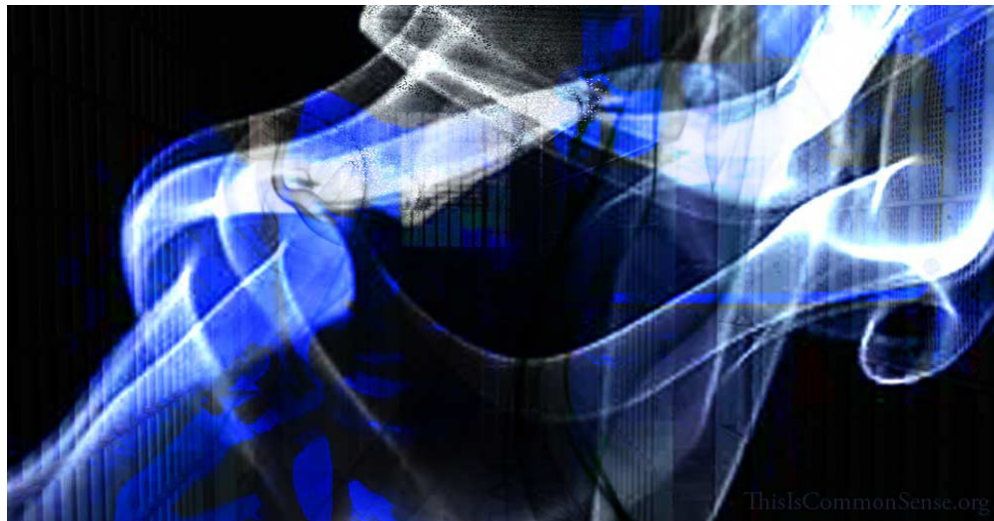
Follow the science! It is an absolute fact that those menthol smokes “disproportionately addict — and kill — Black Americans.”

The reason? “Only 29 percent of White smokers choose menthol, as opposed to 85 percent of African American smokers, according to a National Survey on Drug Use and Health,” *The Washington Post* explains, “fueled by more than half a century of Big Tobacco *aggressively marketing them specifically to Black Americans.*”

“Banning a certain type of cigarettes because black people tend to favor them is stupid and patronizing,” one Post reader commented.

Catch that causation claim? The black-and-white difference between racial group affinity with this flavor is the fault of cunning (white?) advertising execs with a racist penchant for hooking unsuspecting blacks.

Never addressed — or apparently even considered? The possibility that tobacco companies are targeting their promotional efforts in relation to the obvious preferences of their customers.



It is in the news because the U.S. Food and Drug Administration must officially address, by April 29, a formal regulatory petition “demanding menthol cigarettes be banned.”

Support for outlawing menthol-flavoring based on racial justice rationales meets plenty of opposition based on racial . . . *sanity*.

“Opposition,” notes *The Post*, “come[s] from GOP and Democratic officials as well as civil rights groups.”

The idea of providing another police enforcement flashpoint by outlawing an addictive substance used overwhelmingly by blacks seems a non-starter. “We do not think kids should be put in jail or given a ticket for selling menthol,” offered Rev. Al Sharpton.* “You’re going to give the police another reason to engage our people?”

“Banning a certain type of cigarettes because black people tend to favor them is stupid and patronizing,” one *Post* reader commented. “Either have the courage of your convictions and ban all cigarettes (lol) or leave this alone.”

Leave *us* alone.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.