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.”

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.

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.

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Leave us alone.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.