

EXHIBIT 4



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WORLD & NATION

How Big Tobacco used George Floyd and Eric Garner to stoke fear among Black smokers



Demonstrators rally in downtown Los Angeles in August 2020 in opposition to California Senate Bill 793. They contend that the ban on the sale of flavored tobacco statewide — including menthol cigarettes — would unfairly target African Americans. The bill briefly became law, but a successful petition drive will require voters to approve it in November. (Ringo Chiu / Alamy)

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ATLANTA — Retired Deputy Police Chief Wayne Harris stood in front of Black lawmakers and clicked to a [slide of George Floyd](#), pinned down on the pavement with Police Officer Derek Chauvin’s knee on his neck.

“I chose this picture intentionally because I want to set the tone,” he said.

But Harris hadn’t come to the luncheon to discuss police reform or Floyd’s murder.

He was there at the invitation of tobacco maker Reynolds American to urge representatives not to ban menthol cigarettes, the flavor of choice for the vast majority of Black smokers. Using the specter of Floyd's tragic death and the social justice protests it inspired, Harris suggested that prohibiting menthol cigarettes would increase policing in Black communities and create a new layer of racism in America.



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Big Tobacco, Black trauma

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That message echoed through the third day of the annual gathering of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators at the Marriott Marquis hotel in Atlanta in November. Harris did not mention that he serves as chair of the board of the Law Enforcement Action Partnership, an organization that in 2019 received a third of its funds from Reynolds American.

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The lawmakers were told during the first course that the \$40,000 bill for their lunch — pork chops and sweet tea — had been picked up by that same company, the largest manufacturer of menthol cigarettes in the U.S.

Reynolds American's multibillion-dollar market is under threat. About 150 cities and counties have placed some sort of restriction on the sale of menthol cigarettes, most issuing an outright ban. If California votes to prohibit the sale of menthols in November, it would follow Massachusetts as the second state to do so. The Food and Drug Administration has drafted a national ban that could follow in the next few years, which estimates suggest could save more than 600,000 lives, including almost 250,000 Black lives.

But it could cut the approximately 30 billion Newport menthol cigarettes Reynolds American sells every year to zero.

Since last summer, the Los Angeles Times and [the Bureau of Investigative Journalism](#) have tracked strategic efforts across the country by Reynolds American to keep menthol cigarettes in the hands of smokers.

The company has hired a team of Black lobbyists and consultants, including former congressman Kendrick Meek (D-Fla.), and sponsored the organization led by civil rights activist and MSNBC political show host the Rev. Al Sharpton. Those figures have in turn stoked fears among Black communities about what the bans could mean.

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