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For Immediate Release

*******CORE OPPOSES PROPOSED FDA FLAVORED TOBACCO BAN *******
CITING POTENTIAL TO INCREASE CONFLICT BETWEEN LAW ENFORCEMENT & COMMUNITY

The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), in a letter to U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Robert Califf, has stated its opposition to the Agency's product standard banning flavored cigars because of its potential for increasing unnecessary conflict between law enforcement and the communities of color CORE represents.

FDA claims, in its rulemaking, it will pursue enforcement of the new standard against manufacturers and retailers, not against individuals. CORE believes this to be false. The FDA's proposed product standard will result in increased sales of contraband and counterfeit cigars. State and local governments, which are heavily dependent on excise and sales taxes from tobacco products, will actively enforce their laws requiring cigars to be sold only with tax stamps.

Accordingly, CORE maintains, local and state interdiction efforts will be focused on the Low Hanging Fruit -- aka communities of color. These types of encounters have, far too often, gone astray and ended in tragedy. George Floyd, Eric Garner and Michael Brown are all dead. All three incidents have their roots in tobacco enforcement and or regulation.

The organization also disputes the FDA's insistence that the rule is needed to reduce flavored cigar use among youth and "vulnerable populations,".

"Less than 1% of youth ages 12-17 used cigars of any kind". Innis stated. "The latest National Youth Tobacco Survey indicates that the decline in youth usage is accelerating, and that fewer than half of this 1% used flavored cigars." Innis added

CORE urged the FDA to withdraw this ill-considered and unjustified rule be withdrawn in favor of enforcement of existing laws and regulations that minimize the potential for confrontation and over-policing in communities of color.

CORE's full comment is [posted below/linked [here.](#)]