

NBCI Expresses No Confidence In and Denounces the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids for Exploiting Health Crises in the African American Community

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, February 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The National Black Church Initiative \(NBCI\)](#)¹, a coalition of 150,000 African American and Latino faith communities comprising 27.7 million members, has conducted a two-year research study on organizations that use health data for fundraising on the misery of African American people. The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CFTFK) is one such group. Over the past 25 years, CFTFK has used the mortality and morbidity rates of African Americans to raise money and persuade state and federal government entities to allocate untold millions of dollars to investigate, write legislation against, and sue the tobacco industry for billions of dollars. Yet, at the end of the day, there has been no significant reduction in the Black death rate. When it comes to smoking-related diseases, including several forms of cancer, the rate of death remains highest for African Americans.

Rev. Anthony Evans, President of the National Black Church Initiative, says, "The CFTFK has been a disaster for the African American community as it relates to tobacco-related deaths. Their advocacy consistently failed us.



Rev. Anthony Evans, President, National Black Church Initiative

The menthol ban failure is the latest in a string of losses. This is why NBCI expresses no confidence in the CFTFK. I have ordered our churches not to participate anymore. We plan to protest their campaigns in our communities in the near future.”

The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids once had great influence over billions of dollars stemming from the historic tobacco settlement, yet they cannot point to any successful tobacco prevention programs they have funded in the African American community. Their programs have failed to reduce tobacco-related mortality or morbidity or support any models that have achieved any success close to 15%. CFTFK does not have the data to prove that they know what they are doing with the African American community. The CFTFK programs’ approach to prevention in the African American community has been and remains a total failure.

Former President Matthew L. Myers, and the current board leadership, is a lethal combination in the death and dying in the African American community for tobacco-related diseases because of their lack of a strategy to address tobacco-related death and to create a fund to sustain a sustainable prevention program.

While pretending otherwise, CFTFK has no comprehensive, interdisciplinary strategy in place to solve the multilevel health problems facing African Americans. When NBCI tried to sit down and share our research with CFTFK, we were rebuffed and ignored. The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids has only made the problem worse with their repeated failures on the issue of menthol cigarettes (see below). They did not have a clue how to solve the problem of racially disparate, smoking-related mortality and morbidity rates for African Americans, even when they had millions of dollars per year to work with. NBCI and the American Clinical Health Disparities Commission have to conclude that they never gave a damn. Their strategy today is to blame



Logo of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CFTFK)



Christopher Conley, Board Chair, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CFTFK)

everything on Trump, not on their own narcissistic, paternal attitude.

Over the past two decades, African Americans have faced disproportionately high tobacco-related death rates, with smoking causing roughly 45,000 deaths annually in the community, even as overall smoking declined. This is largely due to menthol cigarettes that make quitting harder, leading to higher smoking-attributable mortality for Blacks and significant Black-White disparities in life expectancy due to smoking. Menthol cigarettes alone were linked to 157,000 premature deaths among Black Americans between 1980 and 2018, highlighting the severe, ongoing impact of predatory marketing on this population.

Since 2004, the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids had repeatedly backed federal legislation that would ban all cigarette additives except menthol. Then, when they finally got behind a menthol ban proposal during the Biden administration, they failed to deal with a legal



Matthew L. Myers, Former President, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CFTFK)

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— *Rev. Anthony Evans, President of the National Black Church Initiative*

of 150,000 Black churches to stage nonviolent campaigns against Tobacco-Free Kids from 2026 through 2028 to expose their fake work in the African American community.”

Key Statistics & Trends (Past 20+ Years):

- High Annual Deaths: Around 45,000 African Americans die from smoking-related illnesses each year.
- Disproportionate Impact: Black smokers die from smoking at higher rates than White smokers, despite often smoking fewer cigarettes, and this is linked to deeper inhalation of menthol.
- Menthol’s Role: Menthol cigarettes are a major factor, making it harder to quit smoking, and contributed to 157,000 deaths and 1.5 million new smokers from 1980 to 2018.

loophole tobacco companies could and did use to market “non-menthol” cigarettes with similarly negative effects. In short, they have no clue how to solve this problem. The National Black Church Initiative knows how, which is why we published the [National Black Health Agenda](#).

Rev. Evans adds, “We have tried to work with CFTFK in the past, but to no avail. This is why I have authorized our coalition

- Life Expectancy: Smoking-attributable mortality significantly widens the Black-White gap in life expectancy, especially for men, though disparities are slowly decreasing due to lower youth smoking initiation.

- Leading Cause: Smoking remains the top cause of death in the African American community, surpassing lung cancer, as it impacts cardiovascular disease, stroke, and various other cancers.

ABOUT NBCI

The National Black Church Initiative is a coalition of 150,000 African-American churches, comprising 27.7 million members, working to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare, technology, education, housing, and the environment. NBCI's mission is to provide critical wellness information to all of its members, congregants, churches, and the public. The National Black Church Initiative's methodology utilizes faith and sound health science. We also offer our member congregants and the public helpful, science-based tips for developing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

The National Black Church Initiative's purpose is to partner with major organizations and officials whose primary mission is to reduce racial disparities in various areas, as cited above. NBCI provides faith-based, innovative, and cutting-edge solutions to complex economic and social challenges. Credible statistical analysis, science-based strategies and techniques, and effective methods govern NBCI's programs.

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¹ <http://www.naltblackchurch.com>

² <https://naltblackchurch.com/pdf/blackhealthagenda-congress.pdf>

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/883537632/>

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