

## The American Public's Opinion of Big Tobacco

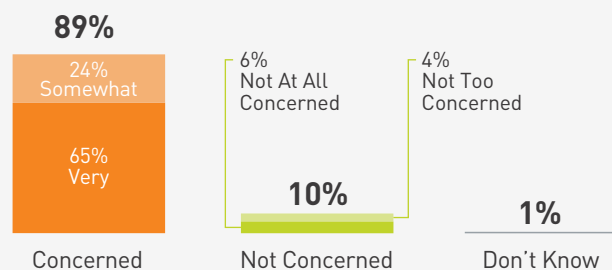
# Most Black voters distrust the tobacco industry and nearly all are concerned about youth vaping

A 2020 Truth Initiative survey of 400 Black voters ages 18 and older, demonstrated a strong distrust of the tobacco industry and their marketing practices. Most Black American voters reported a **belief that the industry misleads the public about its products (68%), spreads faulty research that make their products seem less dangerous (58%), and targets their advertising to youth (58%).**

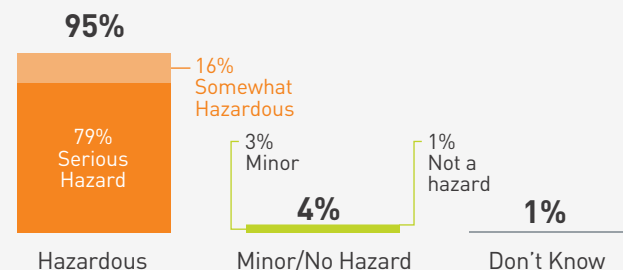
Tobacco is a not only a public health issue — it is a social justice issue — and the death and disease that tobacco products have inflicted on minority communities is devastating. Big Tobacco has a long history of strategically and aggressively targeting the Black community, especially with menthol cigarettes. These tactics include placing more advertising in predominantly Black neighborhoods — major cities like Washington D.C. have up to **10 times more tobacco advertisements** in Black neighborhoods than other neighborhoods — and appropriating culture in marketing, including sponsoring jazz and hip-hop festivals. Black Americans have higher death rates from tobacco-related causes compared to other racial and ethnic groups — with more than 39,000 dying from tobacco-related cancers each year.

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### 89% of Black Americans are concerned that flavors attract minors to vaping



### 95% of Black Americans believe that using e-cigarettes is a health hazard for teenagers and young adults



The tobacco industry's tactics continue today, including efforts to ally with minority groups and improve the industry's image:

- > In June 2020, Altria announced that it would **donate \$5 million** to organizations that address systemic racism, as well as small businesses impacted by demonstrations against police brutality. Altria's donation aligns with a longstanding tobacco industry strategy of **making financial contributions to Black American groups and political leaders** to help engender opposition to stricter regulations, including those against menthol.
- > In 2019, JUUL gave historically Black college Meharry Medical College a **\$7.5 million grant** to launch a study on vaping, smoking, and other nicotine products. The grant is funding the college create the new Meharry Center for the Study of Social Determinants of Health.
- > JUUL also funded an after-school program which allowed them access to Black youth, following in the predatory footsteps of Big Tobacco.
- > Camel announced it is revitalizing a garden space in Miami and creating a **new gallery-garden** as part of the company's artAffect project. In a video on Camel's artAffect website, the curator describes providing a space to support "underserved and underrepresented communities" in the urban location.

For more info on industry tactics to target youth and public opinion about those efforts, read our full reports on how young people are [Seeing Through Big Tobacco's Spin](#) and [How Big Tobacco is trying to sell a do-gooder image and what Americans think about it](#).

**Methodology:** In partnership with Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, Truth Initiative conducted a national survey of registered voters between the ages of 18 and older about their views of the tobacco industry and tobacco use from October 17-28, 2020. A total of 1,583 voters — including 400 African American voters and 400 voters ages 18-24 — were surveyed by cell, landline, and text-to-online. The margin of error was +/- 3.1% (4.9% in the 18-24 sample).



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