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**STATEMENT BY
ALBANY COUNTY LEGISLATOR TIM NICHOLS
IN RESPONSE TO VETO OF LOCAL LAW D**

"I am utterly disappointed and dismayed at County Executive Dan McCoy's veto of Local Law D which would have made Albany County the first county in New York State to ban the sale of tobacco products from pharmacies. This veto is a huge win for Big Tobacco and a crushing blow to public health, future tobacco control efforts and to our kids. Before today's veto, he snubbed tobacco control advocates and taxpayers who spoke overwhelmingly in support of this local law when he skipped his own public hearing he scheduled last on the proposal. He never once met personally to discuss this proposal with them.

For me it is particularly disturbing that the County Executive would cave so easily to the myths perpetuated by the tobacco industry and their front groups for decades that distract, delay and confuse in order to derail common sense tobacco control efforts like Local Law D. Had he taken the time to listen to the facts, I am confident he would have resisted the tobacco industry and their allies and signed this local law. Today, retail pharmacies talk health and wellness, but walk tobacco. This veto will help them get away it. It is hypocritical and shameful. Though this setback gives Big Tobacco a victory today which may slow tobacco control efforts all around the state, someday tobacco will not be sold in retail pharmacies and we will wonder what took so long.

The alternative he has presented, an Unconstitutional proposal to require tobacco retailers with pharmacies to cover-up advertising displays is certain to be challenged in court as has been the case in other localities that have tried to do the same.

In fact, similar legislation was overwhelmingly defeated by the NYS Assembly's Health Committee earlier this year. The McCoy plan is simply an unworkable farce written by the tobacco industry, for the tobacco industry.

In the meantime, I will continue the fight for real tobacco control initiatives like Local Law D as well as several soon to be announced tobacco control initiatives here in Albany County, despite Big Tobacco's newest ally, Dan McCoy."