

Faith United Against Tobacco



January 30, 2008

Dear Governor:

We are writing as national leaders of America's faith community to strongly urge you to fully fund comprehensive tobacco prevention and cessation programs. In 1998, when the states entered into historic legal settlements with the tobacco companies, it was widely accepted that the states would use the money from the tobacco companies to adequately fund programs that work to reduce tobacco use. Unfortunately, most states have broken that promise. We in the faith community believe that our leaders have a moral obligation to keep that promise in order to save countless lives from the horrors of tobacco-caused illness and death.

Our clergy spend much too much time burying mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers who die untimely and grueling deaths because they became addicted to tobacco when they were young. We know all too well how the tobacco companies have spent, and continue to spend, billions of dollars to addict young and old to this deadly product. We also know that you can reduce this addiction, particularly among vulnerable children, by fully funding tobacco prevention and cessation programs as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). For our children's sake, we urge you to do so.

In the past year, two major reports released by the Institute of Medicine, a unit of the National Academies of Sciences, and the President's Cancer Panel reaffirmed the urgent call for states to undertake scientifically proven measures to reduce tobacco use, among them implementing comprehensive tobacco prevention and cessation programs as recommended by the CDC. Last fall, the CDC released updated Best Practices for state tobacco prevention and cessation spending. These reports and updated guidelines reveal that though we have made some progress in reducing tobacco use in this country, there are still too many people who smoke, and far too many teenagers who become addicted to tobacco. We believe that as Governor, you have a moral obligation to save as many of these children as possible from tobacco addiction by adequately funding prevention and cessation programs at CDC-recommended levels, given the initial promise to use the tobacco settlement money to do so. We also urge you to use the additional "bonus" payments from the historic 1998 settlement that states began receiving this year for this purpose.

Faith leaders in your state are also publicly announcing their strong agreement with our statement here. They will be making sure that their congregants know how important it is that tobacco prevention and cessation programs be fully funded. We hope and pray that you listen to their call.

You can find out more about the work of Faith United Against Tobacco across the country to reduce smoking, particularly among children, by visiting www.faithunitedagainsttobacco.org. If you have any questions or need more information about us, you can contact our National Coordinator, Vincent DeMarco at demarco@mdinitiative.org or 410-591-9162.

Thank you for your consideration on this life-saving matter.

Sincerely,



James Winkler, General Secretary
General Board of Church and Society
United Methodist Church



Rabbi Shawn Zevit
Director of Outreach and Tikkun Olam
Jewish Reconstructionist Federation



Bishop Henry Williamson
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church



Rita K. Wert, National President
Woman's Christian Temperance Union



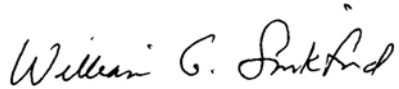
DeWitt S. Williams, EdD MPH CHES
Director, Health Ministries
North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists



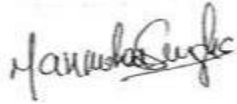
Julie Taylor
Children, Youth and Family Advocacy
Women's Division, United Methodist Church



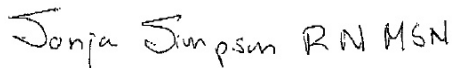
Dr. Sayyid M. Syeed
National Director
Islamic Society of North America



Rev. William G. Sinkford, President
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations



Manmohan Singh
Secretary General
World Sikh Council - America Region



Sonja Simpson RN MSN
President
Health Ministry Association



Rabbi David Saperstein, Director
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism



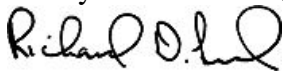
Rev. Dr. Deborah L. Patterson
Executive Director
Deaconess Parish Nurse Ministries, LLC
International Parish Nurse Resource Center



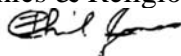
Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley, General Secretary
American Baptist Churches USA



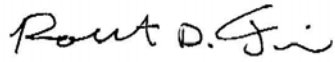
Sara Lisherness
Director, Peace and Justice Ministries
Presbyterian Church (USA)



Dr. Richard Land, President
Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention



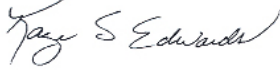
Phil Jones, Director
Brethren Witness/Washington Office



Robert D. Francis
Director for Domestic Policy
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Washington Office



Matthew Ellis, Executive Director
National Episcopal Health Ministries



Rev. Kaye Edwards
Director of Family and Children's Ministries Disciples Home Missions (DHM)
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



Reverend Michael H. Crosby, OFMCap., Coordinator, Tobacco Program
Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility



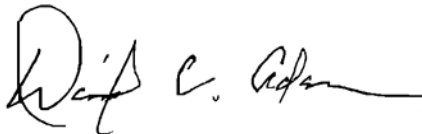
Patricia Burkhardt, Legislative Officer
Church Women United



Barbara Baylor
Program Minister for Health Care Justice
Justice and Witness Ministries, United Church of Christ



Rev. Dr. Todd A. Adams
Associate General Minister and Vice-President
Office of the General Minister and President
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



Rev. David Adams
General Secretary
General Commission on United Methodist Men