



February 15, 2007

Dear Senator/Representative:

As members of Partners for Effective Tobacco Policy (PARTNERS), we are writing to strongly urge you to support the Kennedy-Cornyn and Waxman-Davis bills that would regulate tobacco products. PARTNERS is a coalition of more than 60 national organizations committed to reducing and preventing the staggering death and disease caused by tobacco use. Tobacco use kills more than 400,000 Americans annually and is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States.

Congress has failed to complete action on the strong legislation to address this epidemic that has been introduced in the last two Congresses. Moreover, there is overwhelming support of Americans for regulation of tobacco products by the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA). This support crosses all party, ideological, regional, state, income and educational lines – even a majority of smokers support FDA regulation of tobacco products.

Reflecting that support, FDA legislation in the last Congress enjoyed a broad, bipartisan group of 122 cosponsors in the House of Representatives and 28 in the Senate. It has the robust support of every major national health organization and of a broad cross-section of American faith leaders and organizations. In 2004, this legislation passed the Senate twice – once overwhelmingly; the second time by unanimous consent – but year, after year, it has languished in the House of Representatives.

Legislation providing FDA the authority to regulate the manufacture, distribution, and sale of tobacco products is critically needed to protect the public health. FDA oversight is especially required to crack down on illegal sales of tobacco products to children and to restrict advertising and marketing that appeal to children. The tobacco industry is aggressively marketing as well a new generation of products with unproven claims that they are less harmful. This continued deception of consumers makes ever more urgent the need for FDA restrictions on advertising and marketing, especially to children.

While virtually every other consumer product is regulated, tobacco products continue to be exempt from the most basic oversight. Tobacco companies are not required to test additives for safety, prevent misleading or inaccurate health claims, inform consumers what is in their products, or take any other action to make their products less harmful or addictive. Congress affords no other industry this degree of special protection, costing taxpayers billions of dollars each year to treat tobacco-caused disease through federally funded health programs including Medicare and Medicaid.

Now that strong, effective FDA legislation supported by the public health community has been reintroduced, we ask that you cosponsor it and work for its speedy enactment into law during the first session of the new Congress.

Sincerely,

American Cancer Society  
American Heart Association  
American Lung Association  
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids  
AARP  
Alliance of the American Dental Association  
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Nurse Practitioners  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association for Respiratory Care  
American College of Cardiology  
American College of Chest Physicians  
American College of Clinical Oncology  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine  
American College of Physicians  
American College of Preventative Medicine  
American Dental Association  
American Dental Education Association  
American Dental Hygienists' Association  
Americans For Health Care  
American Medical Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Society of Addiction Medicine  
American Society of Clinical Oncology  
American Thoracic Society  
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses  
Children's Defense Fund  
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America  
General Board of Church & Society of the United Methodist Church  
Hadassah – the Women's Zionist Organization of America  
Interreligious Coalition on Smoking or Health  
March of Dimes  
National African American Tobacco Prevention Network  
National Association of County & City Health Officials  
National Association of Local Boards of Health  
National Education Association  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco Prevention  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Research Center for Women & Families  
National Women's Law Center  
Oncology Nursing Society

Oral Health America  
Partnership for Prevention  
Seventh-day Adventist Church  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
Society for Public Health Education  
Trust for America's Health  
United Church of Christ