

March 26, 2009

The Honorable Henry Waxman  
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Waxman:

We are writing to endorse the "Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act," which you introduced on March 3, 2009. If enacted, this legislation will make a significant contribution in our national campaign to reduce the harm caused by tobacco and to protect our children and public health.

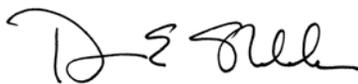
As you are aware, in the next 365 days, more than 400,000 Americans will die prematurely from tobacco use and more than 450,000 children, 12 to 17 years old, will become regular, daily smokers and part of the next generation of grim statistics. This year, under your leadership, the United States Congress has an opportunity to bring about fundamental change by enacting your legislation to regulate tobacco products and their marketing.

The "Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act" is the kind of tobacco regulation that makes sense and that is long overdue. It would prevent the tobacco companies from marketing to children. It would require disclosure of the contents of tobacco products, would authorize FDA to require the reduction or removal of harmful ingredients, and would require FDA to promptly address the complex issues raised by menthol tobacco products. It would prohibit terms like "light" and "low tar" which have been used to mislead smokers into thinking that those tobacco products are less harmful. And it would force the tobacco companies to scientifically prove any claims about "reduced risk" products.

Some have questioned whether FDA can take on this important new task and whether it will have sufficient resources. Having thoroughly studied this issue, we believe that the bill gives the FDA the resources it needs to do the job properly; and, without question, the FDA is the right agency to implement this new regulation because it has a public health mandate and the necessary scientific and regulatory experience.

The Congress can change the course of this public health crisis by voting to enact your legislation to provide FDA with authority over tobacco products. This is a strong bill and would significantly advance the public health.

Sincerely,



Donna E. Shalala, Ph. D.  
Former Secretary of  
Health and Human Services



David Kessler, M.D.  
Former Commissioner of the  
Food and Drug Administration



David Satcher, M.D.  
Former Surgeon  
General



Tommy G. Thompson  
Former Secretary of  
Health and Human Services



Julie L. Gerberding, M.D.  
Former Director of the Centers  
for Disease Control and Prevention



Richard H. Carmona, M.D.  
Former Surgeon  
General