



March 3, 2009

Dear Representative:

We are writing to urge to you to cosponsor and vote for the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, which will be introduced today by Representatives Henry Waxman (D-CA) and Todd Platts (R-PA). This bill would grant the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) the authority to regulate the manufacture and marketing of tobacco products. In the last Congress, this legislation was adopted in the House by an overwhelming, bipartisan vote of 326-102 and garnered 60 Senate sponsors. Regrettably, time ran out before the Senate could act on this legislation. You now have an historic opportunity to pass this life-saving legislation in the 111th Congress and complete this critical unfinished business.

Tobacco-caused diseases remain the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S., killing more than 400,000 Americans each year. More than 1,000 kids become regular, daily smokers each day – and one-third of them will ultimately die from their addiction. Amazingly, tobacco products are virtually unregulated by the federal government.

There is overwhelming support for this legislation by Americans across all geographic, demographic, and political lines. Nationally, voters support Congress passing a bill to give the FDA authority to regulate tobacco by more than a three to one margin (70 to 23 percent) and individual state polls indicate similar levels of support.

There are more than 950 organizations supporting this legislation including the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and hundreds of public health organizations and their allies at the national, state and local levels (the full list of supporting organizations can be seen at: <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/reports/fda/organizations.pdf>). Both the President's Cancer Panel and the Institute of Medicine support Congress giving the FDA the authority to regulate the manufacture and marketing of tobacco products. In its groundbreaking 2007 report, *Ending the Tobacco Epidemic: A Blueprint for the Nation*, the Institute of Medicine argued, "...product regulation by the FDA will advance tobacco control efforts in the United States and around the world. The proposed tobacco control legislation embodies the principles that should govern the regulation of tobacco products in the coming years."

If the FDA is given this common-sense authority to regulate tobacco products, it will be able to:

- Restrict tobacco advertising and promotions, especially to children.
- Stop illegal sales of tobacco products to children.

- Require changes in tobacco products, such as the removal of harmful ingredients or the reduction of nicotine levels.
- Prohibit health claims about so-called "reduced risk" products that are not scientifically proven or that would discourage current tobacco users from quitting or encourage new users to start.
- Require tobacco companies to disclose the contents of tobacco products, changes to their products and research about the health effects of their products.
- Require larger and more informative health warnings on tobacco products.
- Prohibit terms such as "light", "mild" and "low-tar" that mislead consumers into believing that certain cigarettes are safer than others.

This much-needed, bipartisan legislation would protect the public health and should be voted on early in the 111th Congress. We strongly urge you to cosponsor and vote in support of this critically important and historic legislation.

Sincerely,

Daniel E. Smith
President
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Nancy Brown
Chief Executive Officer
American Heart Association

Charles D. Connor
President and Chief Executive Officer
American Lung Association

Matthew L. Myers
President
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids