



May 17, 2010

The Honorable Frank Lautenberg
 United States Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
 United States Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Lautenberg and Senator Durbin:

We are writing to express our strong support for the Smuggled Tobacco Prevention Act. The bill offers Congress an opportunity to promote public health, protect federal and state tax revenues, and fight crime by reducing smuggling of tobacco products and related tobacco tax evasion.

Tobacco smuggling is a significant domestic and international problem for which there are solutions. Globally, approximately one quarter of all legally exported cigarettes end up smuggled across international borders. The potential for high profits with relatively low risks has encouraged organized criminal organizations to engage in tobacco smuggling; some tobacco product smugglers have had ties to terrorist groups.

The Smuggled Tobacco Prevention Act establishes new requirements and increases penalties to help prevent smuggling. Most notably, the bill enhances the ability of government officials to track and trace tobacco products and block their diversion into illegal distribution channels, prohibits the delivery of tobacco products unless federal tobacco taxes have been paid, improves registration and record-keeping requirements, keeps machines used to manufacture tobacco products and to apply tax stamps out of the hands of illegal manufacturers and counterfeiters, makes it tougher for law breakers to get federal tobacco-related permits, encourages more aggressive enforcement efforts, and enhances penalties.

We applaud you for your commitment to combating tobacco smuggling and for introducing this important legislation. It is our sincere hope that the Smuggled Tobacco Prevention Act will be enacted into law this year.

Sincerely,

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
American College of Cardiology
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Medical Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Thoracic Society
Lung Cancer Alliance
National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)
Partnership for Prevention
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions
Society for Public Health Education
United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society
United Way Worldwide