



May 19, 2014

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Levin and Ranking Member Inhofe:

As your Committee works to advance the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (NDAA FY15) later this week, we strongly urge you to reject efforts to block the ability of defense officials to enact policies aimed at reducing tobacco use among active duty service members.

As you know, great strides have been made in reducing tobacco use and helping current tobacco users quit. However, we know that tobacco use continues to be the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. Tobacco use undermines military readiness and has demonstrable negative long-term consequences on the health of our service members. These costs are born out in terms of lives lost prematurely as well as billions in avoidable health care expenditures.

While tobacco use has declined among service members, it remains higher among people serving in the military than in the civilian population. According to DoD data, in 2011 smoking rates were 24.4 percent for Navy personnel and 30.8 percent for Marines, and the rates for smokeless tobacco were 16.9 percent and 31.9 percent, respectively. By comparison, an estimated 19.0 percent adults in the general population reported they were cigarette smokers in 2011, while only 3.2 percent reported using smokeless tobacco.

The Navy has already taken steps to reduce tobacco use, including eliminating the sale of tobacco products in commissaries, ending price discounts for products sold in base exchanges, and making free FDA-approved Nicotine Replacement Therapy products available to all Navy and Marine personnel. Eliminating the sale of all tobacco products on bases and ships, as Secretary Mabus is considering, further demonstrates the significant commitment on the part of the Department of the Navy to improving the health, fitness and readiness of Navy and Marine Corps personnel. It also marks an important step forward in implementing the recommendations from the 2009 Institute of Medicine report *Combating Tobacco Use in the Military and Veterans Populations*.

We commend the Department of the Navy for considering this important step and encourage your Committee not to tie the hands of DoD in advancing initiatives that will further reduce the harms of tobacco use to military personnel.

Sincerely,



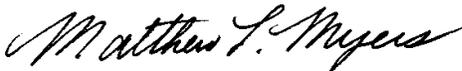
Christopher W. Hansen
President
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network



Nancy A. Brown
Chief Executive Officer
American Heart Association



Harold Wimmer
National President and CEO
American Lung Association



Matthew L. Myers
President
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