



April 10, 2014

The Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
2000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-2000

Dear Secretary Mabus:

We are writing to commend you for your past actions to reduce tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke among Navy personnel and Marines and to express strong support for your proposal to eliminate the sale of tobacco on all bases and ships. The Department of the Navy has been a leader in developing strong policies to reduce tobacco use among its personnel. We strongly encourage you to move forward with adoption and implementation of the proposal, which represents a significant next step toward a tobacco-free U.S. military.

As you know, the use of tobacco could compromise military readiness and performance. The smoking rates in 2011 were 24.4 percent for Navy personnel and 30.8 percent for Marines, and the rates for smokeless tobacco were 6.9 percent and 31.9 percent, respectively.¹ A major contributor to these extraordinarily high rates is an environment that facilitates tobacco use. As was recently noted by Acting Under Secretary Wright and Assistant Secretary Woodson, addressing the sale of tobacco products at military facilities can show that the Department of Defense does not promote tobacco use and is committed to making continued progress on this important health and readiness issue. The elimination of the sale of all tobacco products on all bases and ships would send a clear message that the Department of the Navy is committed to improving the health, fitness, and readiness of Navy and Marine personnel. It would also represent a meaningful step forward in implementing some of the recommendations from the Institute of Medicine's 2009 *Combatting Tobacco Use in the Military and Veterans Populations*.

Smoking impacts nearly every organ of the body and is responsible for a seemingly ever-growing list of diseases. Tobacco use is responsible for 32 percent of heart disease deaths, about 30 percent of all cancer deaths, 79 percent of all chronic obstructive pulmonary disease deaths and 87 percent of all lung cancer deaths.^{2,3} Preventing tobacco use and helping tobacco users quit can generate enormous health benefits for the men and women serving in the Navy and Marines.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to discourage tobacco use among your sailors and Marines. We strongly encourage you to end the sale of tobacco products on all bases and ships to sustain and enhance this progress.

Sincerely,



Christopher W. Hansen
President
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network



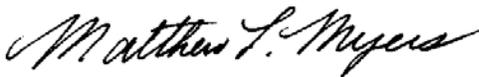
Nancy A. Brown
Chief Executive Officer
American Heart Association



Robin L. Koval
President and CEO
American Legacy Foundation



Harold Wimmer
National President and CEO
American Lung Association



Matthew L. Myers
President
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids



Elissa Myers
President & CEO
Partnership for Prevention

cc: Dr. Jonathan Woodson, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs

¹ Barlas FM, Higgins WB, Pflieger JC, et al. 2011 Health Related Behaviors Survey of Active Duty Military Personnel. February 2013. Report prepared for the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) and U.S. Coast Guard under Contract No. GS-23F-8182H.

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking- 50 Years of Progress. A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Office on Smoking and Health, 2014.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Smoking-attributable mortality, years of potential life lost, and productivity losses – United States, 2000-2004. *MMWR. Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2008;57(45):1226- 1228.