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## **California Leads Nation in Annual “State of Tobacco Control” Report** *Increased Tax Revenue Improves State’s Standing, Local Cities Step Up in Record Numbers*

**Sacramento, CA (January 24, 2018)** – The newly released American Lung Association *State of Tobacco Control 2018* report shows California leads the nation, earning strong grades for its tobacco control policies. The 16<sup>th</sup> annual report grades states and the federal government on policies to prevent and reduce tobacco use. California’s grades improved to the best in the nation thanks to strong policies across the state and the enactment of the new tobacco tax increase approved by voters.

“This year, California began reaping the financial and health benefits of an increased tobacco tax,” said Mark Johnson, Board Chair for the American Lung Association in California. “I’ve seen personally how effective it can be as one of my close relatives, a long-time smoker, finally quite the day the tobacco tax went into effect. Our family was so grateful for his lifestyle change and we’ve already seen a big improvement in his health.”

The hundreds of millions in increased tobacco taxes from Proposition 56 now flowing to critical state health and prevention programs lead to a big grade increase for California. The state received an A grade for funding for state tobacco prevention programs, up from an F in 2016. California’s grade for smoking cessation services also improved from an F to a C.

### **California’s 2018 Grades**

- Funding for State Tobacco Prevention Programs – Grade A (Up from an F in 2016)
- Smokefree Air Policies – Grade A
- Level of Tobacco Taxes – Grade B
- Minimum Age of Sale for Tobacco Products to 21 – Grade B
- Coverage and Access to Services to Quit Tobacco - Grade C (Up from an F in 2017)

In conjunction with the national report, the American Lung Association in California released its companion [\*\*State of Tobacco Control 2018 – California Local Grades\*\*](#) report, which issues grades for all 482 cities and 58 counties in California on local tobacco control policies.

Highlights from this year’s report include:

- A record number of 10 communities improved their overall grade to an A from last year
- California now has a total of 31 communities with an overall A grade
- Seventeen fewer communities received an overall F grade compared to last year

Unfortunately, half of California’s population still live in communities scoring a D or F. This includes nearly half of the 10 most populous cities in the state.

“Smoking rates continue to decline in California, yet tobacco use remains the state’s leading cause of preventable death and disease, killing nearly 40,000 Californians each year,” said Vanessa Marvin, Vice President, Public Policy and Advocacy for the American Lung Association in California. “Tobacco use is a serious addiction, and the fact that 11 percent of California adults still smoke highlights how much work remains to be done in our communities to prevent and reduce tobacco use.”

State and local elected officials must continue to pursue policies that reduce youth access to tobacco products and e-cigarettes, reduce exposure to secondhand smoke in multi-unit housing and public facilities and protect

those relentlessly targeted by Big Tobacco's deceptive marketing campaigns including low-income and rural communities and the LGBTQ community.

For media interested in speaking with an expert about the [State of Tobacco Control](#) or the [State of Tobacco Control 2018 – California Local Grades](#) report, lung health, tobacco use and tobacco control policies, contact the American Lung Association in California at [ryan.endean@lung.org](mailto:ryan.endean@lung.org) or (916) 585-7666.

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**About the American Lung Association in California**

The American Lung Association in California is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through research, education and advocacy. The Lung Association is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer, to improve the air we breathe, to reduce the burden of lung disease on individuals and their families, and to eliminate tobacco use and tobacco-related diseases. For more information about the American Lung Association in California or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-685-4872) or visit [www.lung.org/california](http://www.lung.org/california)