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May 1, 2012

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norman Dicks
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Dicks:

As leading organizations dedicated to reducing the lethal toll of tobacco, we are writing to reiterate our strong support for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) oversight over tobacco products. We are deeply concerned that amendments to reduce funding for or weaken implementation of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (Tobacco Control Act) may be offered during consideration of the FY 2013 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies appropriations bill. Our organizations request that you support the full authorized funding level for the FDA's Center for Tobacco Products and oppose any effort to weaken the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) authority over tobacco products.

We are particularly concerned that there may be an attempt to exclude many types of cigars from oversight by the FDA as proposed in H.R. 1639. Despite claims made by the tobacco industry, cigar smoking is not safe. According to the U.S. Surgeon General and the National Cancer Institute, cigar smoking causes cancer of the oral cavity, larynx, esophagus and lung, as well as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and heart disease. We, along with thirty-five additional organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Medical Association, the American Public Health Association, and the American Dental Association, sent a letter to the House of Representatives last September outlining strong opposition to H.R. 1639, in part because some of the cigars that could escape regulation under H.R. 1639 may include flavored cigars that are attractive to children.

Last year, during consideration of the FY 2012 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies appropriations bill, the House rejected an attempt to reduce funding for the FDA's Center for Tobacco Products and we urge that you to oppose any similar effort this year.

After more than a decade of careful and thorough consideration, in 2009 Congress approved the Tobacco Control Act with strong, bipartisan support to protect America's children and the nation's health by putting in place common sense standards to regulate the tobacco industry. The law will help reduce the devastating health and economic toll of tobacco use on the nation. This lifesaving law should not be weakened.

The Tobacco Control Act was carefully crafted to protect the health of both current tobacco users and those that do not currently use tobacco products, especially children. Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, killing more than 400,000 Americans and costing the nation \$96 billion in health care expenses each year. The Tobacco Control Act provided the FDA with the tools necessary to regulate tobacco products using an independent science-based process. We urge you to oppose any attempt to impede in any way the FDA's ability to protect public health. To do otherwise would serve the interests of the tobacco industry to the detriment of the health of the nation.

Sincerely,



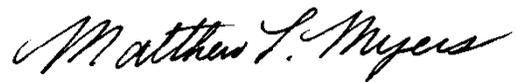
Christopher W. Hansen
President
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network



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

Cc: Committee on Appropriations