



March 26, 2009

Dear Representative:

We are writing to urge support for H.R.1256, The Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act. This bipartisan bill, introduced by Representatives Henry Waxman (D-CA) and Todd Platts (R-PA) would grant the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) the authority to regulate the manufacture and marketing of tobacco products. As you know, the House Energy and Commerce Committee voted to report H.R. 1256 by a 39-13 margin on March 4th, and the bill is now scheduled for a vote on the House floor. Members of Congress have an historic opportunity to pass this life-saving legislation.

There is overwhelming support for this legislation by Americans across all political, demographic and geographic lines. Nationally, voters support Congress passing a bill to give the FDA authority to regulate tobacco by more than a three to one margin (70 to 23 percent).

There are more than 980 organizations supporting this legislation including the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Heart Association, American Lung Association and Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and hundreds of public health and faith organizations and other allies at the national, state and local levels (the complete list can be seen at: <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/reports/fda/organizations.pdf>) Both the President's Cancer Panel and the Institute of Medicine support Congress giving the FDA the authority to regulate the manufacture and marketing of tobacco products. In its groundbreaking 2007 report entitled *Ending the Tobacco Epidemic: A Blueprint for the Nation*, the Institute of Medicine argued, "...product regulation by the FDA will advance tobacco control efforts in the United States and around the world. The proposed tobacco control legislation embodies the principles that should govern the regulation of tobacco products in the coming years."

If the FDA is given the common-sense authority to regulate tobacco products, it will be able to:

- Restrict tobacco advertising and promotions, especially to children.
- Stop illegal sales of tobacco products to children.
- Require changes in tobacco products, such as the removal of harmful ingredients or the reduction of nicotine levels.
- Prohibit health claims about so-called "reduced risk" products that are not scientifically proven or that would discourage current tobacco users from quitting or encourage new users to start.
- Require tobacco companies to disclose the contents of tobacco products, changes to their products and research about the health effects of their products.
- Require larger and more informative health warnings on tobacco products.
- Prohibit terms such as "light", "mild" and "low-tar" that mislead consumers into believing that certain cigarettes are safer than others.

This much-needed bipartisan FDA legislation protects the public health and should be enacted in this session of Congress. We strongly urge you to vote for this critically important legislation when it is brought up for consideration by the House.

Sincerely,



Daniel E. Smith
President
American Cancer Society Cancer Action
Network



Charles D. Connor
President and Chief Executive Officer
American Lung Association



Nancy Brown
Chief Executive Officer
American Heart Association



Matthew L. Myers
President
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

