



April 29, 2015

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

We are writing to express our support for the Tobacco Tax and Enforcement Act, a bill that would improve public health by raising the price of tobacco products and reducing the smuggling of tobacco products.

The Tobacco Tax and Enforcement Act would increase the federal excise tax on cigarettes by 94 cents per pack and increase tax rates on other tobacco products to an equivalent level. The bill would also enhance law enforcement's ability to combat illegal trafficking of tobacco products by, among other things, facilitating the tracking and tracing of tobacco products through distribution channels.

We applaud your efforts to increase the price of tobacco products. Tobacco taxes have been studied extensively and have been found to be one of the most effective ways to reduce smoking and other tobacco use, especially among kids. Every 10 percent increase in the real price of cigarettes reduces overall cigarette consumption by approximately three to five percent and reduces the number of kids who smoke by six to seven percent. In a 2012 report, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimated that a 50 cent increase in the federal tax on a pack of cigarettes would reduce the number of people who use cigarettes, save lives, and reduce future deficits. Based on CBO's estimates, we project that a 94 cent increase in the federal cigarette tax would cause about 2.6 million adults to quit and prevent about 18,000 adult smoking-caused deaths by 2026. Increasing taxes on other tobacco products would provide important additional health benefits, including making these products less affordable to kids. The provisions to reduce tobacco smuggling will help ensure that the public health benefits of tobacco taxes are fully realized.

Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States and is responsible for approximately \$170 billion in health care costs each year. Most tobacco users want to quit and wish they never started using these products. Fortunately, there are proven strategies, including raising the price of tobacco products, to reduce the number of young people who start using tobacco products and help current tobacco users to quit. By increasing tobacco taxes, Congress can improve health, save lives, and reduce the health care costs related to tobacco use.

Sincerely,

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Lung Association
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids