



January 29, 2007

The Honorable [NAME]
U.S. House/Senate
Address, City, State
Fax: (###) ###-####

Dear Senator/Representative [NAME]:

As members of Partners for Effective Tobacco Policy (PARTNERS), we are writing to strongly urge you to make federal regulation of tobacco products an urgent priority for the first session of the 110th Congress. PARTNERS is a coalition of more than 60 national organizations committed to reducing and preventing the staggering death and disease caused by tobacco use. Tobacco use kills more than 400,000 Americans annually and is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States.

Congress has failed to complete action on the strong legislation to address this epidemic that has been introduced in the last two Congresses. Moreover, there is overwhelming support of Americans for regulation of tobacco products by the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA). This support crosses all party, ideological, regional, state, income and educational lines – even a majority of smokers support FDA regulation of tobacco products.

Reflecting that support, FDA legislation in the last Congress enjoyed a broad, bipartisan group of 122 cosponsors in the House of Representatives and 28 in the Senate. It has the robust support of every major national health organization and of a broad cross-section of American faith leaders and organizations. In 2004, this legislation passed the Senate twice – once overwhelmingly; the second time by unanimous consent – but year, after year, it has languished in the House of Representatives.

Legislation providing FDA the authority to regulate the manufacture, distribution, and sale of tobacco products is critically needed to protect the public health. FDA oversight is especially required to crack down on illegal sales of tobacco products to children and to restrict advertising and marketing that appeal to children. The tobacco industry is aggressively marketing as well a new generation of products with unproven claims that they are less harmful. This continued deception of consumers makes ever more urgent the need for FDA restrictions on advertising and marketing, especially to children.

While virtually every other consumer product is regulated, tobacco products continue to be exempt from the most basic oversight. Tobacco companies are not required to test additives for safety, prevent misleading or inaccurate health claims, inform consumers what is in their products, or take any other action to make their products less harmful or addictive. Congress affords no other industry this degree of special protection, costing taxpayers billions of dollars each year to treat tobacco-caused disease through federally funded health programs including Medicare and Medicaid.

We anticipate that strong, effective FDA legislation supported by the public health community will be reintroduced early in the 110th Congress. We ask that you cosponsor it and work for its speedy enactment into law during the first session of the new Congress.

Sincerely,

American Cancer Society
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
AARP
Alliance of the American Dental Association
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Respiratory Care
American College of Cardiology
American College of Chest Physicians
American College of Clinical Oncology
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
American College of Physicians
American College of Preventative Medicine
American Dental Association
American Dental Hygienists' Organization
American Medical Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
American Society of Clinical Oncology
American Thoracic Society
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Children's Defense Fund
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
General Board of Church & Society of the United Methodist Church
Hadassah – the Women's Zionist Organization of America

Interreligious Coalition on Smoking or Health
March of Dimes
National African American Tobacco Prevention Network
National Association of County & City Health Officials
National Association of Local Boards of Health
National Education Association
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco Prevention
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center
Oncology Nursing Society
Oral Health America
Partnership for Prevention
Seventh-day Adventist Church
Society for Public Health Education
Trust for America's Health
United Church of Christ