

March xx, 2005

«FullProperName»

«Street»

«CityStateZip»

VIA FAX: «Fax»

Dear Senator «LastName»:

The undersigned organizations committed to preventing and reducing suffering from tobacco-related disease urge you to cosponsor S. 666, introduced by Senators Mike DeWine (R-OH) and Edward Kennedy (D-MA), which would provide the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) with effective authority to regulate the manufacturing, marketing and sale of tobacco products.

In the last Congress, the Senate voted overwhelmingly in support of the DeWine-Kennedy legislation to provide the FDA with authority over tobacco products. In the first vote the Senate voted 78-15 last year to adopt an amendment that included the FDA bill and a \$10 billion buyout for tobacco farmers. The amendment was offered to the Foreign Sales Corporation legislation. While the provisions to assist tobacco farmers were enacted into law, unfortunately the FDA provisions were dropped in conference. Subsequently, the Senate adopted the bill as freestanding legislation by voice vote.

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in this country and results in the death of more than 400,000 Americans each year. In addition, it costs our nation more than \$75 billion in health care costs, including \$400-500 million per year due to complications resulting from tobacco use by pregnant women. We urge this Congress to take action to reduce the terrible human and economic toll of tobacco on our nation by quickly enacting S. 666 into law. Failure by Congress to take the steps necessary to protect the public health will – irresponsibly – allow tobacco to continue to be a major economic and social scourge on our society.

Unlike other products we consume, tobacco products are not subject to basic oversight or common sense health regulations. Tobacco is this nation's most unregulated consumer product. S. 666 would grant FDA the authority to:

- Stop illegal sales of tobacco products to children and adolescents.
- Require changes in tobacco products, such as the reduction of harmful chemicals.
- Restrict advertising and promotions designed to appeal to children.
- Prohibit unsubstantiated and misleading health claims about so-called “reduced risk” tobacco products.
- Require the disclosure of the contents of tobacco products and of tobacco industry research about the health effects of their products.
- Require larger and more informative health warnings on tobacco products.

The need to protect children from tobacco is urgent. Every day, another 2,000 children become addicted smokers, one-third of whom will die prematurely as a result. It is clear from the tobacco industry's internal documents that they have targeted children in the marketing of their deadly products. The latest tactic of the companies is the marketing of candy-flavored cigarettes, such as *Twista Lime*, *Strawberry Liquid Zoo* and *Caribbean Chill*.

S. 666 provides for common sense regulations and would end the special protection currently provided to the tobacco companies and provide FDA with authority over tobacco products similar to the authority it

has over other products. FDA would have the authority to stop tobacco marketing and sales to our children and to subject tobacco products to the same consumer protections, such as ingredient disclosure, product regulation and truthful packaging and advertising, applied to other products. We should not continue the current situation in which FDA has to approve every ingredient in food to ensure safety while toxic substances like ammonia, formaldehyde and arsenic found in cigarettes are completely unregulated.

Congress can reduce the terrible toll of tobacco and prevent the tobacco companies from marketing to children by granting the FDA effective, meaningful authority over tobacco products. We urge you to cosponsor S. 666 and join this bipartisan effort to enact legislation that would grant the FDA authority to regulate tobacco and protect America's children. Please contact any of our organizations if we can be of assistance to you or your staff. Thank you for your attention to this important public health matter.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Cancer Society
American College of Chest Physicians
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Dental Association
American Dental Hygienists' Association
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American School Health Association
American Society of Addiction Medicine
American Society of Clinical Oncology
American Thoracic Society
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Association of Teachers of Preventive Medicine
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
Center for Tobacco Cessation
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church
Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America
March of Dimes
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Local Boards of Health
National Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco Prevention
National Research Center for Women & Families
Society for Public Health Education