

September 7, 2004

«FullProperName»

«Street»

«CityStateZip»

Dear Senator «LastName»:

Congress has an historic opportunity to embrace responsible legislation that will help to reduce the suffering and death caused by tobacco. The House-Senate Conference Report on the FSC/ETI bill should include the DeWine-Kennedy FDA language without any weakening changes.

On July 15, the U.S. Senate took an unprecedented step towards granting the U.S. Food and Drug Administration effective authority to regulate tobacco products. The Senate passed the DeWine-Kennedy Amendment to the FSC bill with an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 78-15. The amendment linked FDA authority with the tobacco grower buyout. Our organizations view this approach as critical to accomplish our goal of securing effective FDA authority over tobacco products in order to protect the public health.

Tobacco use kills more than 400,000 Americans each year and costs our nation more than \$75 billion in health care costs. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, tobacco use by pregnant women alone costs between \$400-500 million per year due to complications such as low-birth-weight, premature births and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). And every day another 2,000 kids become regular smokers, one-third of whom will die prematurely as a result. Yet tobacco products are virtually unregulated to protect consumers' health and safety. For decades, the tobacco companies have marketed their deadly products to our children, deceived consumers about the harm their products cause, and failed to take any meaningful action to make their products less harmful or less addictive. The DeWine-Kennedy language would finally end the special protection enjoyed by the tobacco industry and protect our children and the nation's health instead.

This legislation meets the standards long established by the public health community for a strong FDA tobacco regulation bill that protects the public health. It would give the FDA the necessary tools and resources to effectively regulate the manufacturing, marketing, labeling, distribution and sale of tobacco products. The FDA would have the authority to:

Stop illegal sales of tobacco products to children and adolescents

Require changes in tobacco products, such as the reduction or elimination of harmful chemicals, to make them less harmful or less addictive.

Restrict advertising and promotions that appeal to children and adolescents.

Prohibit unsubstantiated health claims about so-called "reduced risk" tobacco products that would have the effect of discouraging current tobacco users from quitting or encouraging new users to start.

Require the disclosure of the contents of tobacco products and tobacco industry research about the health effects of their products.

Require larger and more informative health warnings on tobacco products.

The public health community worked in good faith to achieve this much-needed bipartisan FDA legislation that both protects the public's health and that can be enacted in this session of Congress. We remain concerned that opponents of effective FDA tobacco regulation will seek to

weaken this provision prior to final passage. Our organizations will work vigorously to protect this compromise approach and will oppose efforts to eliminate or weaken the FDA authority it provides. Please support the DeWine-Kennedy FDA Amendment and oppose any and all weakening changes.

Sincerely,

AARP

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Academy of Nurse Practitioners

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Baptist Churches USA

American Cancer Society

American College of Cardiology

American College of Chest Physicians

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American College of Physicians

American College of Preventive Medicine

American Dental Association

American Dental Hygienists' Association

American Heart Association

American Lung Association

American Medical Association

American Medical Women's Association

American Public Health Association

American Psychological 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 Schools of Public Health

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

Children's Defense Fund

Church of the Brethren Witness/Washington Office

Church Women United

Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church

General Board of Global Ministries The United Methodist Church, Special Program on

Substance Abuse and Related Violence

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America

Health Ministries Association

Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, Tobacco Program

Interreligious Coalition on Smoking or Health

Islamic Society of North America

March of Dimes

Mautner Project

National Association of County and City Health Officials

National Association of School Nurses

National Center for Policy Research for Women & Families  
National Education Association  
National Latino Council on Alcohol and Tobacco Prevention  
National Woman's Christian Temperance Union  
National Women's Law Center  
Oncology Nursing Society  
Office of Family and Children's Ministries of Disciples Home Missions of the Disciples  
Praxis Project  
Presbyterian Church (USA), Washington Office  
Seventh-day Adventist Church  
Society for Public Health Education  
United Church of Christ