

Tobacco, Most Lethal, Should Be Regulated at Last

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The American Lung Association emphatically disagrees with what editors describe as "grotesque" in "Cynicism and Big Tobacco." Bipartisan majorities in Congress who have sponsored this legislation have it right: It is time to end the special protections long afforded to the tobacco companies. What is grotesque is the fact that 438,000 Americans die each year from tobacco-related diseases such as lung cancer, emphysema and heart attacks. The legislation will reduce this horrific toll by giving the FDA the authority and resources to curb marketing to kids, set product standards for all products -- both existing and new -- and require any claims made about tobacco products to actually be truthful.

The FDA is the only scientific and regulatory agency that has the experience and know-how to hold the rogue tobacco industry accountable. The legislation fully funds all tobacco efforts at the FDA through a user fee on the tobacco companies so that the FDA will have the resources to do the job right. With 1,100 children becoming regular smokers each day, Congress cannot afford to wait to enact this lifesaving legislation.

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