

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Michelle Bernth
American Lung Association
314-645-5505 x1001 (p)
636-866-8340 (c)
mbernth@breathehealthy.org

Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act Passes House of Representatives

Washington, D.C., (July 30, 2008) – The American Lung Association congratulates the U.S. House of Representatives for its historic passage of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act today. The overwhelming margin of support this legislation received highlights the bipartisan consensus that the time has come for it to become law. The American Lung Association now calls on the U.S. Senate, where the legislation has 57 sponsors, to pass this important public health bill in September..

“This legislation will finally provide the U.S. Food and Drug Administration with the authority it needs to regulate the marketing, production and distribution of tobacco products, which have been historically exempt from the most basic oversight,” said Bernadette A. Toomey, President and CEO of the American Lung Association. “The House of Representatives is to be commended for its vote, which history will look back upon as a turning point in our nation’s battle against deadly tobacco products.”

Each year, more than 438,000 Americans die from tobacco-related diseases, including lung cancer, emphysema and chronic bronchitis. Tobacco companies spend billions of dollars on marketing in an attempt to addict a new generation of tobacco consumers. Tragically, more than 1,300 American children become regular smokers each day.

“As our nation wrestles with how to pay for increasing health care costs, we must look at the tremendous financial burden caused by tobacco in this nation,” Toomey added. “Tobacco use costs the United States an estimated \$193 billion annually, including \$96 billion in direct health care expenditures.”

The American Lung Association extends a heartfelt thank you to lead sponsors of the tobacco bill, Representatives Henry Waxman (D-CA) and Tom Davis (R-VA), along with Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman John Dingell (D-MI), for their tremendous leadership and commitment to this legislation and to protecting public health from the dangers of tobacco products. We also thank Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-SC) for their strong support and leadership.

Passage of legislation has long been a priority of the American Lung Association. Today’s historic vote marks the first time the U.S. House of Representatives has passed this legislation. In 2004, the U.S. Senate passed similar legislation twice, but it was ultimately defeated in the House.

The Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act will give the FDA the authority to do the following:

- Restrict tobacco advertising and promotions, especially to children.
- Ban candy-flavored cigarettes.
- Require tobacco companies to disclose the contents of tobacco products and conduct research about the health effects of these products.
- Require changes in tobacco products, such as the removal or reduction of harmful ingredients.

- Prohibit health claims about so-called “reduced risk” tobacco products that are not scientifically proven or that would discourage current tobacco users from quitting or encourage new users to start.
- Require larger, more effective health warnings on tobacco products.
- Prohibit terms such as “low-tar,” “light” and “mild,” terms which mislead consumers into believing that certain cigarettes are safer than others.

About the American Lung Association: Beginning our second century, the American Lung Association is the leading organization working to prevent lung disease and promote lung health. Lung disease death rates continue to increase while other leading causes of death have declined. The American Lung Association funds vital research on the causes of and treatments for lung disease. With the generous support of the public, the American Lung Association is “Improving life, one breath at a time.” For more information about the American Lung Association or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) or log on to www.lungusa.org.