



June 25, 2019

Chairman Rusty Hicks
California Democratic Party
1830 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95811

Re: Campaign contribution from tobacco company

Dear Chairman Hicks:

We were dismayed to see reports in the media of the California Democratic Party (CDP) accepting a substantial contribution from the tobacco company Juul Labs through sponsorship of the California Democratic Party Convention held in San Francisco May 31 to June 2.

We request that CDP return the contribution from Juul Labs for sponsorship at the convention and make an explicit commitment not to accept any contributions from tobacco companies in the future.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) launched the Snuff Tobacco Money out of California Politics campaign in 2014. Since we debuted the campaign, we have asked every state officeholder and candidate for state office a very simple question: Will you help snuff tobacco money out of California politics by rejecting any campaign contribution from any tobacco company including, but not limited to Altria Client Services Inc. and its affiliates; Cigar Association of America; NJOY; Juul Labs and RAI Services Company and its affiliates?

We are broadening the ask to reject campaign contributions from tobacco companies to include the major state parties in California. Since we launched this campaign, this contribution would represent the first time the CDP has accepted a campaign contribution from a tobacco company. In fact, there is no evidence of CDP accepting contributions from tobacco companies going back to 1998.

There can be no debate that Juul Labs is a tobacco company under a California law that was overwhelming passed by the legislature with bipartisan support and signed by Governor Brown in 2016. Electronic cigarettes are clearly defined as a tobacco product:

Section 22950.5 of the Business and Professions Code defines a tobacco product as:

(A) A product containing, made, or derived from tobacco or nicotine that is intended for human consumption, whether smoked, heated, chewed, absorbed, dissolved, inhaled, snorted, sniffed, or ingested by any other means, including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, chewing tobacco, pipe tobacco, or snuff.

(B) An electronic device that delivers nicotine or other vaporized liquids to the person inhaling from the device, including, but not limited to, an electronic cigarette, cigar, pipe, or hookah.

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In California alone, tobacco companies have spent nearly \$200 million the last decade and a half on lobbying and campaign contributions trying to block policies that would reduce tobacco use. Their business model is simple. The more people who use tobacco products, the more money tobacco companies make. Tobacco companies spend money to influence elections and legislation with one purpose—to prevent policies from passing that will result in fewer people using tobacco products. They don't care who dies from using their products, so long as they keep smoking. The tobacco industry spends nearly \$600 million on marketing every year in California to addict new customers—primarily children—and then spends millions of dollars to attempt to stop policies from passing that would reduce the number of smokers in our state.

Our campaign to highlight the corrosive impact of the tobacco industry and their campaign contributions has been a success. After decades of virtual veto power in the legislature and at the ballot, the tobacco companies were resoundingly defeated in 2016. Voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 56 which is a \$2 tax on all tobacco products with funding going to healthcare and tobacco prevention programs. The legislature also passed an historic package of bills that reasserted California's leadership in tobacco control.

However, the job is not done. The tobacco companies are still spending unseemly amounts of money and even after their defeat in 2016, they have spent over \$9.5 million in the last two years to prevent policies that would reduce tobacco consumption. They have been especially active at the local level, opposing ordinances across California at the city and county level that would save lives. Their efforts prove there is much work still to do. According to the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids report on the toll of tobacco in California, it is estimated that 40,000 Californians will die from smoking every year. There are 441,000 children who are alive now that will die prematurely due to smoking-related disease. It is the single largest preventable cause of death. Smoking kills more people than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders and suicides combined. The annual health care costs in California directly caused by smoking are \$13.29 billion. Medi-Cal covers \$3.5 billion of those costs each year. The burden to the California taxpayer is \$706 per household. Smoking-caused productivity loss in California costs an additional \$10.35 billion a year. Just as the tobacco companies spend money to addict children and adults to their products, so too, do they try to addict elected officials and state parties to tobacco money. You have the opportunity to help end this vicious cycle. Please return the campaign contribution from Juul. We look forward to hearing back soon.

Sincerely,

Tim Gibbs
Senior Director, Government Relations
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN)

Cc: Jessica Patterson, Chair California Republican Party

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