



June 1, 2021

The Honorable Dick Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C., 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
21 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi
United States House of Representatives
115 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Durbin, Senator Wyden, and Representative Krishnamoorthi:

I write today to convey the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network's (ACS CAN) support for "The Tobacco Tax Equity Act of 2021." ACS CAN is the non-profit, non-partisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society. ACS CAN advocates for legislative, regulatory, and policy solutions that will make cancer a national priority. On behalf of the more than 16 million cancer patients and survivors, we would also like to thank you for your leadership in addressing the critical issue of tobacco use in the U.S. Doubling the federal cigarette tax rate, establishing a federal tax on e-cigarettes, and providing for parity across all tobacco products are policy solutions proven to reduce tobacco use.

ACS CAN has advocated for comprehensive public policies to effectively reduce tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke in the U.S. In fact, since the 1990's the national reductions in overall cancer mortality can be partially attributed to preventing youth from starting to use tobacco products and helping current users quit. Yet tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S. More than 480,000 deaths each year are caused by cigarette smoking, including 28.8 percent of all cancer deaths and 85.5 percent of lung cancer deaths. Tobacco use costs the U.S. more than \$300 billion in health care costs and productivity losses.

Significant tobacco tax increases are a highly effective means of reducing tobacco use. Increasing the price of tobacco products through excise tax increases prevents smoking initiation, promotes smoking cessation, and reduces the prevalence and intensity of tobacco use by teens and adults. Tobacco taxes are particularly effective at reducing tobacco use among low-income individuals who disproportionately shoulder the burden of tobacco-related disease and health care costs. Reductions in tobacco use translate to less tobacco-related disease and premature death, lowering tobacco-related health care costs for government, businesses, and individuals, and improving worker productivity. Significant increases in tobacco taxes also produce a reliable and significant source of new revenue.





We are particularly pleased to see this legislation include parity for all tobacco taxes, including e-cigarettes. It is important that tax increases apply to all tobacco products at an equivalent rate to encourage people to quit rather than switch to a cheaper product, as well as to prevent youth from starting to use any tobacco product. Currently, e-cigarettes have no federal tax, and the tobacco industry has taken advantage of lower taxes on cigars to make them more appealing to youth. Today, e-cigarettes and cigars are the most used tobacco products among youth. Therefore, it's important that all products are taxed at an equivalent rate so the industry cannot continue to target youth for a lifetime of addiction. Tax parity can also generate more revenue and reduce tax evasion. ACS CAN advocates for cigarette tax increases of at least \$1 per pack with tax parity for all other tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, to have a meaningful public health impact and maximize revenue.

We look forward to working with you to make this legislation law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lisa A. Lacasse'.

Lisa A. Lacasse, President

