

TOBACCO TAX OF 2006 WILL REDUCE TEEN SMOKING

The Tobacco Tax Act of 2006 achieves two goals: it will reduce smoking, especially among kids, and fund critical healthcare priorities such as disease prevention, medical research, children's health insurance and emergency room care. With regard to teen smoking, here's what we know*:

NATIONALLY—

- 3 million kids under the age of 18 are current smokers.
- Every day, about 4,000 kids try their first cigarette; and each day another 1,500 kids under 18 years of age become new regular, daily smokers.
- Almost 90 percent of adult smokers began at or before age 18.

IN CALIFORNIA—

- 47,900 California kids (under 18) become new daily smokers each year.
- In California, 13.2% (273,000) high school students smoke.
- California kids buy or smoke 59.8 million packs of cigarettes each year.
- There are 574,400 kids now under 18 and alive in California who will ultimately die prematurely from smoking, if current trends continue.
- Cigarette companies spend more than \$15.4 billion each year to promote their deadly products. That's more than \$41.5 million spent every day to market cigarettes, and much of that marketing directly reaches and influences kids. The estimated portion spent for California marketing is between \$920 million and \$1.5 billion.
- Published research has found that kids are three times as sensitive to tobacco advertising than adults and are more likely to be influenced to smoke by cigarette marketing than by peer pressures, and one-third of underage experimentation with smoking is attributable to tobacco company advertising and promotion.

The Tobacco Tax Act of 2006 is supported by a broad coalition, including the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, and the American Lung Association. They are sponsoring this initiative because it will help keep kids from starting to smoke by increasing the price of cigarettes and funding tobacco prevention programs. The tobacco companies oppose this measure for the same reason. Tobacco companies know that ninety percent of smokers start as teens.

The initiative puts in place strict safeguards and audits to ensure that funds go exactly where voters intend. Legislators will not be able to raid the trust funds.

** Statistics courtesy of Tobacco-Free Kids— www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets*