

Faith United Against Tobacco



March 2nd, 2009

Dear Senator/ Representative,

We are writing to you as leaders of Faith United Against Tobacco, a coalition of diverse national faith denominations and groups, to urge you to support legislation authorizing the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate tobacco products. We in the faith community have seen the ravages of tobacco use in our communities, and we believe that our nation's leaders, and particularly our Members of Congress, have a moral obligation to do all they can to protect Americans, especially our children, from tobacco addiction and related disease. We are united in asking our leaders in Washington to quickly end this tragedy.

Nearly 1,000 national, state and local groups support such legislation. Both the President's Cancer Panel and the Institute of Medicine support Congress giving the FDA the authority to regulate the manufacture and marketing of tobacco products. The Institute of Medicine, in its groundbreaking report, *Ending the Tobacco Epidemic: A Blueprint for the Nation*, argued that "product regulation by the FDA will advance tobacco control efforts in the United States and around the world. The proposed Tobacco Control legislation embodies the principles that should govern the regulation of tobacco products in the coming years."

If the FDA is given the common-sense authority to regulate tobacco products, it will be able to:

- Restrict tobacco advertising and promotions, especially to children.
- Stop illegal sales of tobacco products to children.
- Ban candy-flavored cigarettes, which clearly are starter products for young smokers.
- Require changes in tobacco products, such as the removal of harmful ingredients or the reduction of nicotine levels.
- Prohibit health claims about so-called "reduced risk" products that are not scientifically proven, that would discourage current tobacco users from quitting or that would encourage new people to start smoking.
- Require tobacco companies to disclose the contents of tobacco products, changes to their products and research about the health effects of their products.
- Require larger, stronger and more informative health warnings on tobacco products.
- Prohibit terms such as "light", "mild" and "low-tar" that mislead consumers into believing that certain cigarettes are safer than others.

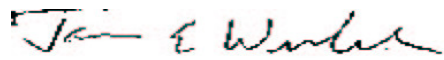
Over the last few years, Faith United Against Tobacco has been working to draw attention to the need for FDA oversight of tobacco products. We speak out on this issue because we have buried too many mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers struck down early because of tobacco addiction. We need your help to end this tragedy in our lifetime.

In the last Congress, legislation to provide FDA with authority over tobacco products was passed by the House of Representatives with an overwhelming 326-102 vote and was also passed by the

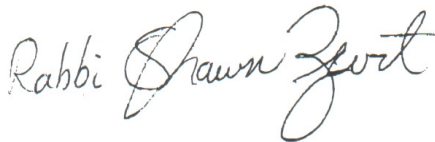
Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. We ask that you cosponsor this legislation as soon as it is introduced again in this Congress and work for its speedy passage. It is time to protect our children and families.

If you have any questions or would like to respond to this request, please contact Vinny DeMarco, Coordinator for Faith United Against Tobacco, at 410-235-9000 or by email at demarco@mdinitiative.org.

Sincerely,




James Winkler, General Secretary
General Board of Church and Society
United Methodist Church



Rabbi Shawn Zevit
Director of Outreach and Tikkun Olam
Jewish Reconstructionist Federation



Rabbi Jeffrey A. Wohlberg
President, Rabbinical Assembly



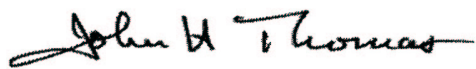
Bishop Henry Williamson
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church



Dr. DeWitt Williams, Director, Health Ministries, North American Division,
Seventh-day Adventists



Rita K. Wert, President
National Woman's Christian Temperance Union



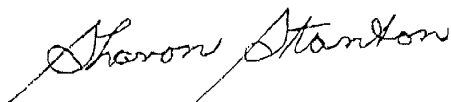
Rev. John Thomas, General Minister and President
United Church of Christ



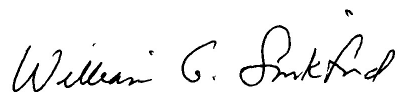
Julie Taylor
Children, Youth and Family Advocacy



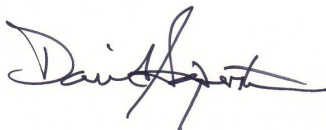
Dr. Sayyid M. Syeed, National Director
Islamic Society of North America



Sharon Stanton, President
Health Ministries Association



Reverend William G. Sinkford, President,
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations



Rabbi David Saperstein, Director and Counsel
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism



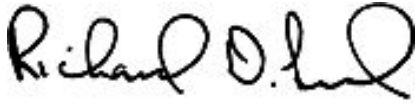
Reverend Deborah L. Patterson, Executive Director
International Parish Nurse Resource Center



Dr. Walter L. Parrish, II, Executive Minister
American Baptist Churches of the South



Rev. Dr. A Roy Medley, General Secretary
American Baptist Churches USA



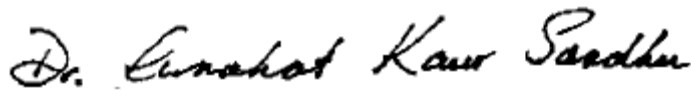
Dr. Richard D. Land, President, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission
Southern Baptist Convention



Sara Lisherness
Director, Peace and Justice Ministries
Presbyterian Church (USA)



Rev. Michael Kinnamon, General Secretary
National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA



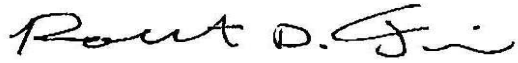
Dr. Anahat Kaur (Sandhu)
Secretary General, World Sikh Council - America Region



Phil Jones, Director
Church of the Brethren Witness/Washington Office



Heather Gonzales
National Association of Evangelicals



Robert D. Francis, Director for Domestic Policy,
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Washington Office



Matthew Ellis, Executive Director
National Episcopal Health Ministries



Patricia G. Burkhardt, Legislative Officer
Church Women United



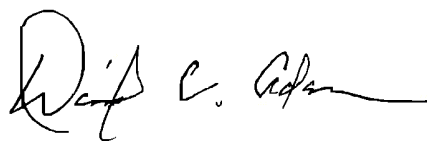
Dr. Randy Brinson
Founder and Chairman, Redeem the Vote



Barbara Baylor, M.P.H., Minister for Health and Wellness
United Church of Christ



Rev. Dr. Todd A. Adams
Associate General Minister and Vice-President
Office of the General Minister and President
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



Rev. David Adams, General Secretary
General Commission on United Methodist Men