

# Faith United Against Tobacco



May 14, 2007

## **SAMPLE OF LETTER SENT TO ENTIRE VIRGINIA DELEGATION**

Dear XXX:

We are writing to you on behalf of faith leaders in Virginia to strongly urge you to cosponsor H.R. 1108, the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act. The purpose of this legislation is to grant the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authority to regulate tobacco products. Representatives Henry Waxman (D-CA) and Tom Davis (R-VA) have introduced this legislation; nearly 160 Representatives have joined the growing list of co-sponsors, while in the Senate, Senators Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and John Cornyn (R-TX) have gathered 44 of their colleagues to cosponsor the bill.

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, killing over 400,000 Americans every year, yet tobacco products are not regulated by the federal government. We believe that it is time for Congress to address this moral issue and enact strong legislation supported by the faith and public health communities to give the FDA the authority to regulate tobacco products.

Until Congress grants the FDA this authority, the tobacco companies will continue to market their deadly products to children. Moreover, the evidence about the tobacco industry's misdeeds and the harm caused by this unregulated product keeps mounting. On August 17, 2006, U.S. District Judge Gladys Kessler found the major tobacco companies to be racketeers who have lied – and continue to lie – to the American people about the health risks of their products and their marketing to children. On the heels of this court decision, a report by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health found that tobacco companies secretly and significantly increased the levels of nicotine in cigarettes between 1998 and 2004.

The faith community spends too much time burying mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers who die because they became addicted to tobacco products when they were young. Unless we grant the FDA the authority to regulate tobacco products, they will continue to mislead consumers and discourage smokers from quitting by making unproven claims that some tobacco products are safer than others. And they will continue to hide the truth about the dangers of their products and fail to take even the most minimal steps to reduce the number of Americans who die from tobacco use.

Our commitment goes beyond signing our names to this letter. We are asking our congregations to support this effort and to communicate the importance of this legislation to their elected officials. Many local clergy and lay leaders are doing this online through a web-link: <http://www.vafaithunitedagainsttobaccoproducts.org/>.

It is our sincere hope that you will cosponsor H.R. 1108. If you have any questions or would like

to reply to this request, please contact Vincent DeMarco, Coordinator for Faith United Against Tobacco at 410-591-9162 or [demarco@mdinitiative.org](mailto:demarco@mdinitiative.org).

Sincerely



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



Rev. Sterling A. Wilder,  
Prayer of Faithful Temple  
Jubilee Community Center, Lynchburg



Bishop James E. Swanson, Sr.,  
Holston Conference (includes Western Virginia),  
United Methodist Church



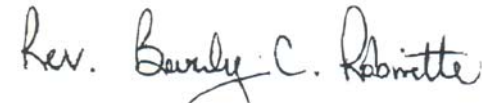
Martha Stokes, Director of Lay Life and Work  
Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church



Betty M. Smith, RN, FCN  
Parish Nurse Coordinator, Petersburg Baptist Association



Linda Royer, Executive Director,  
Adventist Nursing Connection



Rev. Beverly C. Robinette  
Pastor, Emory UMC/Associate Chaplain, Emory & Henry College Emory, VA



Pastor Brian Rhodes  
Seventh-day Adventist Churches of Arlington and Fairfax

*Gerri McDaniel*

Gerri McDaniel,  
Parish Nurse Coordinator  
Roanoke Valley Baptist Association

*Sandra Knodel*

Sandra Knodel  
Co-Director, The Festival Center, United Church of Christ

*Timothy D. Kobler*

Rev. Timothy Kobler  
Chaplain, Emory & Henry College  
Emory, VA

*Jesse Kearns*

Jesse Kearns  
Associate Regional Minister  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Virginia

*Charlene Kammerer*

Bishop Charlene Kammerer  
Virginia Conference,  
United Methodist Church

*Elder Sylvia Hobson*

Elder Sylvia Hobson  
New Birth Kingdom Church

*Addie E. Haynes*

Addie Haynes, President  
Virginia Conference  
United Methodist Women

*Kim M. Goddard*

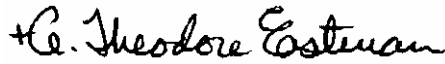
Rev. Kim Goddard, District Superintendent  
Abingdon District of Holston Conference, United Methodist Church

*Kaye S. Edwards*

Kaye Edwards, Director of Family and Children's Ministries  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
(home in Lynchburg, Virginia)



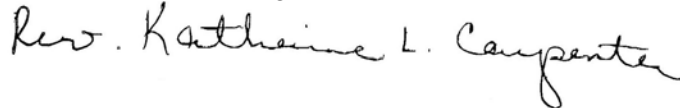
Rev. David L. Edwards, Pastor  
The Church of the Covenant, United Church of Christ/Disciples of Christ



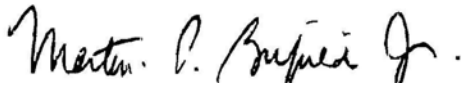
A. Theodore Eastman  
Retired Bishop, Episcopal Church



Rev. Clayton Childers,  
Director of Conference Ministries, General Board of Church and Society  
United Methodist Church  
(home in Manassas, Virginia)



Rev. Katherine Carpenter  
Pastor, Rustburg Presbyterian Church



Rabbi Martin P. Beifield, Jr.  
Congregation Beth Ahabah, Richmond



Cynthia Abrams  
Director, Alcohol, Other Addictions and Health Care Programs  
United Methodist Church  
Manassas, Virginia