

RICHARD J. DURBIN
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United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-1304

November 30, 2004

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The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to urge you to send the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) to the U.S. Senate, to be immediately considered for ratification. As of today, 40 countries from all regions of the world have ratified this treaty, meaning that in 90 days it will become international law.

The FCTC was adopted unanimously by the World Health Assembly in May of 2003. The treaty is a result of years of tireless efforts by governments to fashion an agreement that will improve health and reduce the death and disease caused by tobacco, which remains the single biggest preventable cause of death in the world. There are currently an estimated 1.3 billion smokers worldwide. Half of them, some 650 million people, are expected to die prematurely of a tobacco-related disease. With proper implementation, this tobacco treaty will represent an historic turning point in the fight against tobacco use and save millions of lives around the world.

The tobacco treaty is especially important to developing nations. It commits nations to prohibiting tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (with an exception for nations with constitutional constraints, such as the United States). It commits them to requiring large warning labels covering at least 30 percent of the principal display areas of the cigarette pack. The treaty also provides nations with a roadmap for enacting strong, science-based policies in other areas such as secondhand smoke protections, tobacco taxation, tobacco product regulation, combating cigarette smuggling, public education, and tobacco cessation treatment.

The FCTC holds great potential for improving health and saving lives around the world. The United States' participation in this treaty would be an important signal to the

international community that the United States takes its responsibility as the leader in global public health seriously. I urge you to submit the treaty to the U.S. Senate for ratification as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dick Durbin", written in a cursive style.

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator