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Congresswoman Doris Matsui Votes to Protect Sacramento Kids, Families from Dangers of Tobacco

Legislation Gives FDA Necessary Power to Prevent Tobacco Sales to Kids, Educate Youth About Severe Health Risks of Smoking

Washington, D.C. – Today, Representative Doris Matsui (CA-05), voted to protect America's kids and families from the harmful effects of tobacco and tobacco products, and the addictive ingredients allowed under current law. The legislation passed by the U.S. House of Representatives today, the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, will grant the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) the authority to regulate the advertising, marketing, and manufacturing of tobacco products – giving the FDA the tools it needs to protect public health.

“Tobacco remains the number-one cause of preventable death in America,” said Congresswoman Matsui. “Nearly half a million Americans die from tobacco each year, with another 8.6 million suffering chronic illnesses as a result of their smoking habit. These are more than numbers; this is a national public health concern. By monitoring and regulating the sale and advertising of tobacco products, we can better protect our children and families from negative health outcomes.”

H.R. 1256 gives FDA the authority it has long sought to develop restrictions on the advertising and promotion of tobacco products. The bill also requires tobacco companies to disclose the ingredients in each product and gives the FDA the power to demand changes to those ingredients. The bill requires more specific health warnings and reinstates the 1996 rule restricting the marketing of tobacco products to youth.

Tobacco products contain up to 4,000 chemicals, 200 of which are deadly and 60 of which are known to cause cancer. The most dangerous is nicotine, a powerful chemical that makes tobacco products addictive and causes heart problems. Additionally, tobacco products also include ammonia, cyanide, arsenic and thousands of other poisons. Tobacco smoke also contains tar, which adheres to and damages lung tissue, as well as carbon monoxide, a deadly poison that destroys red blood cells. All of these chemicals can cause serious health problems,

and when mixed together in the human body, can be fatal.

“Every day, more than 3,500 young people try a cigarette for the first time while another 1,000 become regular, daily smokers,” said Jane Hagedorn, CEO Breathe California in Sacramento. “About one third of these kids will die prematurely as a result. This landmark bill gives the FDA the necessary power to prevent tobacco sales to kids and educate our youth about the very serious risks of these products.”

The bipartisan bill is supported by more than 1,000 organizations, including the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Heart Association, American Lung Association and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Phillip Morris USA, the U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Company, as well as six small tobacco product manufacturers have also come out in support of the legislation.

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