

# Chairman Dingell, Subcommittee on Health Hearing entitled, "H.R. 1108, Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act"

Statement of Congressman John D. Dingell, Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
HEARING ON "H.R. 1108, FAMILY SMOKING PREVENTION AND TOBACCO CONTROL ACT"  
October 3, 2007

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing on a very critical public health issue, tobacco use, and, more specifically, on H.R. 1108, the "Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act".

The harmful effects of tobacco products and its toll on human lives have been known for decades. In spite of efforts to decrease the number of smokers, cigarette smoking remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. Cigarette smoking is responsible for about 1 in 5 deaths annually, or about 435,000 deaths per year. In addition to the 45.1 million U.S. adult smokers, it is estimated that each day more than 1,000 persons younger than 18 years of age become addicted to tobacco products. Not only has tobacco use claimed lives, but it also has caused serious financial losses. The use of tobacco costs the United States more than \$167 billion annually in terms of lost productivity and healthcare expenditures.

In 1996, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) attempted to address this problem by issuing a final rule asserting regulatory authority over tobacco products. This rule would have made great strides in reducing the prevalence of underage smoking and use of smokeless tobacco products through strict distribution, marketing, and labeling provisions.

Unfortunately, in 2000, after several court challenges, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that FDA did not have the authority to regulate tobacco products. Since then, there have been numerous attempts to pass legislation granting the FDA this authority.

States have done their part to address this issue. In 1998, the Attorneys General of 46 States signed the Master Settlement Agreement with the four largest U.S. tobacco companies to recover billions of dollars in costs associated with treating smoking-related illnesses. These funds have been used to pay for tobacco-control programs. Now is the time for the Federal Government to do its part.

H.R. 1108 has broad support from the public health community. We will look closely at this legislation and engage in a fair process that is inclusive of the public health community, industry, and other interested stakeholders.

I appreciate this hearing, Mr. Chairman. I thank Rep. Waxman for his leadership on this issue. I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses and the input of our Members.

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce  
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