

April 22, 2008

Dear Representative:

The undersigned organizations, representing the nation's cardiovascular specialists, urge you to vote in favor of the "Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act" (H.R. 1108) and oppose all weakening amendments during the Energy and Commerce Committee markup.

Heart disease is the number one killer of both men and women in the U.S. and smoking is a major cause of heart disease. Around 35 percent of all smoking-related deaths in the U.S. are from heart disease. Cigarette smokers are 2 to 4 times more likely to develop coronary heart disease than nonsmokers, and 2 to 3 times more likely to die from it. Women are at especially high risk.

We strongly support the "Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act" which would help protect the public from the harm of tobacco products by giving the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authority to regulate the manufacture, distribution, sale, labeling, advertising and promotion of tobacco products.

Tobacco products, despite our knowledge of the health risks of their use, are exempt from basic health and safety regulations that apply to other consumer products. Without FDA oversight of tobacco products, companies are free to make unproven claims, including claims that a low-tar cigarette is a safer alternative to other cigarettes. They are also free to introduce new products, such as candy-flavored cigarettes, to hook a new generation. FDA oversight over tobacco products is critical to reducing the number of tobacco-related heart conditions and stopping young people from picking up the habit.

Please show your commitment to better control over tobacco products and the fight against heart disease by voting for passage of H.R. 1108 and opposing all weakening amendments.

Sincerely,

American College of Cardiology  
American Society of Nuclear Cardiology  
The Heart Failure Society of America  
Heart Rhythm Society  
Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography  
The Society for Vascular Medicine