



ACS CAN California: Snuff Tobacco Money out of California Politics Campaign Frequently Asked Questions

June 2016

What is the Snuff Tobacco Money out of California Politics campaign?

The **Snuff Tobacco Money out of California Politics** campaign is about bringing attention to candidates and legislators who accept tobacco money. The mission of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is to save lives from cancer. To achieve that mission, our organization works tirelessly to promote a pro-public health, anti-tobacco agenda in the California Legislature. Until recently, tobacco companies have successfully stymied virtually every significant legislative effort that would have helped people quit tobacco use, prevented youth from starting or protected people from second-hand smoke. One purpose of this campaign is to try and reduce the influence of the tobacco companies in California's state politics by making it more difficult for candidates and state officeholders to accept tobacco contributions. The industry of addiction and deception has a stranglehold on the Legislature and it is time to change that. Another purpose of this campaign is that it will give us the opportunity to educate both candidates and officeholders on the harm that tobacco inflicts on our state and the lengths to the industry will go to in order to protect profits built on human suffering.

Which candidates and officeholders are being asked to reject tobacco money?

Every candidate running for state office will be asked to reject contributions from tobacco companies. ACS CAN is also asking all sitting Senators who do not face an election in 2016 to take the challenge. We are not asking legislators who are termed out this year and who we know are not running for any sort of future state office. We will be tracking tobacco contributions for all committees a candidate may be associated with including committees for other offices and ballot measure committees. Currently, we are not focusing on Congressional lawmakers or candidates, only state-level.

What about candidates and officeholders who have taken tobacco money in the past?

This campaign began on July 1, 2014. ACS CAN will only be looking forward from there. If a legislator has taken tobacco money in this election cycle, they will have a chance to wipe the slate clean and help us mitigate Big Tobacco's future influence on state politics.

How much money have the tobacco companies spent in lobbying and campaign contributions in the last five years in California?

The tobacco companies have spent over \$50 million in the last five years in California on lobbying and campaign contributions.

How much harm do tobacco companies cause in California every year?

- It is the single largest preventable cause of death.
- 40,000 Californians will die from smoking every year.
- 441,000 children who are alive now will die prematurely due to smoking-related disease.

- Smoking kills more people than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders and suicides combined.
- The annual health care costs in California directly caused by smoking are \$13.29 billion.
- California taxpayers pay \$3.5 billion of those costs each year in the form of Medi-Cal costs.
- The tax burden from smoking-caused government expenditure is \$777 per household.
- Smoking-caused productivity loss in California is \$10.35 billion a year.

How have the tobacco companies targeted low-income and minority communities?

In the United States, about 28% percent of adults who are below the poverty level smoke, compared to 17 percent of adults who are at or above the poverty level.

Since the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) in 1998, the average youth in the United States is annually exposed to 559 tobacco ads, every adult female 617 advertisements and every African American adult 892 ads. Expenditures for magazine advertising of mentholated cigarettes, popular with African Americans, increased from 13 percent of total ad expenditures in 1998 to 49 percent in 2005.

African American teen smokers have a greater risk of developing long-term consequences from smoking than other ethnic groups, and are in danger of experiencing the negative effects of tobacco earlier in their lifetime. African Americans smoke at higher rates than other racial/ethnic groups in California.

How will encouraging state legislators to reject tobacco contributions affect legislation?

While this campaign is not an attempt to link one vote to a campaign contribution, it is an attempt to mitigate an atmosphere where some of the state's officeholders seem to be unduly influenced by the tobacco companies.

We want to make sure legislators know that there is no industry as harmful to the public as the tobacco companies. Their products, if used correctly, this year will kill tens of thousands of Californians and more than five million people worldwide. ACS CAN is trying to change the notion that the tobacco companies have a legitimate point of view in the Capitol. It's clear that any policy that is beneficial to the tobacco companies will result in more death and disease.

Where will this information be available?

The information will be on our website at www.notobaccomoney.org.

Will tobacco contributions to political parties and independent expenditures be tracked? What about money spent lobbying at the State Capitol?

All money that the tobacco industry spends to influence the political process will be tracked. There is not one penny that the tobacco companies spend in the California Legislature that does not result in harm to our state. It is important that candidates, officeholders, and the public understand that.

If I accepted the challenge in 2014, do I need to renew in 2016?

You do not need to renew your participation in the campaign if you are running for the same office. For instance, if you accepted the challenge during a run for the assembly in 2014, you do not need to renew if you are running for re-election for the same seat in 2016. However, if you are running for senate in 2016 after accepting the challenge for an assembly run in 2014, you would need to renew. A renewal would also be necessary for a run for a constitutional office.

What if I am a candidate who has not accepted a campaign contribution from tobacco, but does not want to fill out the form or online response to officially sign up for the campaign?

We appreciate that there are many candidates who either don't accept or were not offered campaign contributions from tobacco companies. However, we think it is an important step to sign your name either on a form or electronically stating your opposition to the harm the tobacco companies cause to California. If you do not complete the online form or sign the official form to accept the challenge, you will not be listed as accepting the challenge on the website or other ACS CAN materials.

Can I still accept your challenge if I have accepted a tobacco donation in the past?

Yes—so long as you return all contributions you have accepted in the same election cycle in which you originally accepted them, you can accept the challenge. We will happily highlight your decision to return the tobacco contribution on our website.