

Public Citizen

NEWS RELEASE

HOLD FOR RELEASE UNTIL
Weds., Oct. 27, 1993, 11:00 a.m.

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HEALTH GROUP'S REPORT ON KEY ANTI-TOBACCO MEASURES SHOWS LINK BETWEEN INDUSTRY MONEY, CONGRESSIONAL VOTES

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Tobacco industry campaign contributions to members of Congress have a direct, highly significant relationship to the way lawmakers have voted on recent anti-tobacco legislation in both Houses, according to a new report by the Public Citizen Health Research Group.

In a first-of-its-kind analysis of the entire U.S. Congress, the report shows that the more money members of the House and Senate received from tobacco industry interests, the less likely they were to support or co-sponsor tobacco control positions such as a federal tax increase on cigarettes.

In the House of Representatives, fewer than 9 percent of the lawmakers who received the most tobacco money co-sponsored tobacco control measures during the 1992-93 legislative session. By contrast, 40 percent of members in the group receiving the smallest amount of tobacco money co-sponsored one or more pieces of tobacco control legislation.

In the Senate, only 8 percent of members in the highest paid group acted as co-sponsors of tobacco control legislation introduced in 1992-93. Of the group receiving the smallest amount of tobacco money, 36 percent signed on as co-sponsors of anti-tobacco legislation.

Analyzing the 55-43 (with two abstentions) vote in the Senate to defeat the Aug. 1991 Bingaman Amendment to the Department of Defense reauthorization bill, which would have ended federal subsidies for tobacco products sold in military commissaries, the report found that 72 percent of the 25 Senators receiving the smallest amount of tobacco contributions voted in favor, while only 7.7 percent of the 26 receiving the largest amount of tobacco money supported the measure.

The cost to the industry for such influence was nearly \$2.5 million between 1991 and 1992, still only 4/1,000 of 1 percent of the \$60 billion in tobacco-related sales during the same two-year period.

[more]

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The report also demonstrates how, at a time of increasing anti-tobacco action at the state and grassroots levels, industry-sponsored political action committees have increased their contributions to Senators. For example, total PAC donations in the 1987-88 session were \$379,549; in the 1991-92 session, donations rose by 62 percent to \$613,577.

"The fact that tobacco money buys pro-tobacco results is clear, consistent and undeniable," said Dr. Sidney M. Wolfe, Director of the Public Citizen Health Research Group. "This conflict takes on added significance as Congress begins to consider substantial increases in tobacco taxes as part of health care reform."

"The tobacco industries' choke-hold on anti-smoking legislation demonstrates the need for significant campaign finance reform," said Joan Claybrook, President of Public Citizen. "Unless Congress takes the opportunity in the coming weeks to pass extensive public funding measures and impose spending limits for congressional races, corporate campaign contributions will continue to poison the democratic process and the health of millions of Americans."

Among other conclusions reached in the report:

- * Republicans were consistently less likely than Democrats to support tobacco control measures.

- * While lawmakers from tobacco-producing states were less likely than their counterparts to support anti-tobacco legislation, regional loyalties only partly explained the statistical link between money and votes.

- * In the House of Representatives, 136 members of the 102nd Congress (1991-92) and 143 members of the 103rd Congress (1992-93) took no tobacco money. Only 17 of the current members of the Senate took no tobacco money between 1987-92.

"In the last two Congresses, no major tobacco control legislation has been enacted, and money has clearly been a major reason why," said Dr. Stephen Moore, Staff Researcher for Public Citizen and a co-author of the report. "If, for example, Congress enacted a \$2-a-pack increase in the cigarette tax, it would ultimately result in 1.9 million fewer premature deaths from tobacco."

Copies of the report, "Contributing to Death: The Influence of Tobacco Money on the U.S. Congress," by Stephen Moore, M.D., Sidney M. Wolfe, M.D., Deborah Lindes and Cliff Douglas, are available for \$15 from Public Citizen, Publications Dept., 2000 P St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.



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Joan Claybrook, President

**STATEMENT BY STEPHEN G. MOORE, M.D.
STAFF RESEARCHER, PUBLIC CITIZEN'S HEALTH RESEARCH GROUP
CONCERNING - CONTRIBUTING TO DEATH:
THE INFLUENCE OF TOBACCO MONEY ON THE U.S. CONGRESS**

October 27, 1993

Introduction

Tobacco kills almost 500,000 people a year in the United States making it the leading cause of preventable death in the nation. To place this in perspective, tobacco is responsible for more deaths each year than alcohol, illicit drug use, violence, automobile crashes, accidents, and the AIDS epidemic combined.

In spite of the overwhelming threat to the public's health posed by tobacco, tobacco is the least regulated consumer product on the market. Tobacco is specifically exempted from the major consumer protection laws which have been enacted to protect the public from dangerous products.

Why does this paradox exist? Why does the United States Congress refuse to take action to protect the American public from tobacco, which, when used as directed, kills people. The answer is money. Congress has been paid to do nothing by the tobacco lobby. The tobacco industry paid approximately \$2.5 million for Congressional inaction during the 1991-92 Congressional session.

As a result of this tobacco industry "generosity", the United States Congress has failed to enact a single piece of significant tobacco control legislation during either the 102nd or 103rd Congresses. By significant legislation, I am referring to legislation such as a significant tax increase on tobacco products. For example, it has been shown that the proposed \$2 a pack tax increase on cigarettes would save an estimated 1.9 million lives among people currently living.

We at Public Citizen's Health Research group sought to more fully understand the relationship of tobacco money to pro-tobacco results. In order to do this, we examined the relationship between the amount of money that each member of the House and the Senate received from the tobacco industry over a specified time period and the member's record on tobacco control issues.

Methodology

The methodology for this study is described under section I on page 5 of the report. I will review it for you briefly here. We obtained information from the Federal Election Commission (FEC) on donations to members of Congress from the 10 major tobacco political action committees (PACs). (See page 5 of the report for a complete listing of the PACs.) The time period reviewed in the House is 1/1/91-12/31/92. The time period reviewed in the Senate is 1/1/87-12/31/92, broken down into two-year Congressional cycles. The reason for choosing the time frames that we did is that we wanted to include an election cycle for each member of Congress, since more money is received then.

Also included in our analysis were campaign contributions from people closely aligned with the tobacco industry. These individuals were defined as either board members of the major tobacco companies or those who listed an affiliation with a major tobacco company on their FEC reports.

Additional factors were also included in the analysis, such as information about each member's committee membership, caucus membership (House only), whether or not the member was from a tobacco state, and party affiliation.

Voting records on recorded votes, as opposed to voice votes, which dealt with tobacco control issues, and co-sponsorship lists for tobacco control legislation introduced during the 102nd and 103rd Congresses, were obtained for both the House and the Senate, as was the membership list for the House bipartisan Task Force on Tobacco and Health. We then examined the influence of the amount of tobacco money received, district location, and party on the member's record on tobacco control issues. (See Appendix A on page 26 for a listing of tobacco money received, voting record, and a record of co-sponsorship of tobacco control bills for each member of the Congress.)

The Results

Who Gives

In Table 1 on page 6 and Table 2 on page 7 of the report are listings of the individual tobacco PACs and the amount of money given to members of the House and Senate, respectively. The tobacco PACs and tobacco industry aligned individuals donated a total of \$2,391,642 to the U.S. Congress between 1991-92. The largest single contributor was R.J. Reynolds which donated a total of \$852,363 to members of the U.S. House and Senate.

Who Receives

Of the current members of the U.S. Congress, 83 Senators and 297 House Members received money from the tobacco industry. Members who received money received an average of \$13,967 in the Senate and \$4,360 in the House. (As mentioned above, the time periods are different in the two chambers.) The complete list of the top 20 tobacco money receivers for each chamber is included in the report beginning on page 8.

The good news is that there were 143 House members and 17 Senators who received no tobacco interest money. These members are listed beginning on page 9 of the report. It is important to note, however, that new House members were significantly more likely to have received no tobacco interest money.

What the Money buys

Members who received more tobacco interest money were significantly less likely to support tobacco control measures than members who received less money. For example, as is illustrated in Figure 2 on page 22 of the report, during the 102nd Congress 38% of the House Members in the bottom one-third of tobacco money receivers co-sponsored tobacco control legislation. This is compared to the 3.4% of members who were among the top one-third of tobacco money receivers, who co-sponsored tobacco control legislation.

The downward stair stepping relationship, as demonstrated in Figures 1-4, beginning on page 21, graphically illustrates how as tobacco money increases, support for tobacco control measures decreases. This is a highly consistent and statistically significant finding within the report.

Political party and district location also played a role. For example, Republicans were consistently less likely to support tobacco control issues than Democrats.

Members from tobacco states (GA, KY, NC, SC, TN, VA) consistently failed to support tobacco control measures. This association was most evident in the Senate as not one Senator from the tobacco states co-sponsored a single piece of tobacco control legislation in either the 102nd or 103rd Congresses.

Using a statistical technique called logistic regression, when the factors of money, district location and party are considered simultaneously it is the money which is most consistently associated with a member's position on tobacco control issues.

Conclusion

This study, the first ever at a Federal level, demonstrates that the more money a member of Congress accepts from tobacco interests, the less likely he or she is to lend active support to tobacco control legislation by signing on as a co-sponsor or by joining the Congressional Task Force on Tobacco and Health. Members most highly paid by tobacco interests have also, as a group, been most likely to oppose the few tobacco control bills that survive to come to the floor for a vote.

Public Citizen's Health Research Group thinks that this is wrong. It is wrong for members of Congress to place the special interests of the tobacco industry, whose product is the number one cause of preventable death in the United States, above the health of the entire nation. We call on all members of Congress to refuse contributions from tobacco interests. It is time for members to act in the best interests of the people who elected them and to work to diminish the public health menace posed by tobacco.

Statement by Sidney M. Wolfe, M.D.
Director, Public Citizen's Health Research Group
Concerning Contributing to Death
A Study of the Influence of Tobacco Money on the U.S. Congress
October 27, 1993

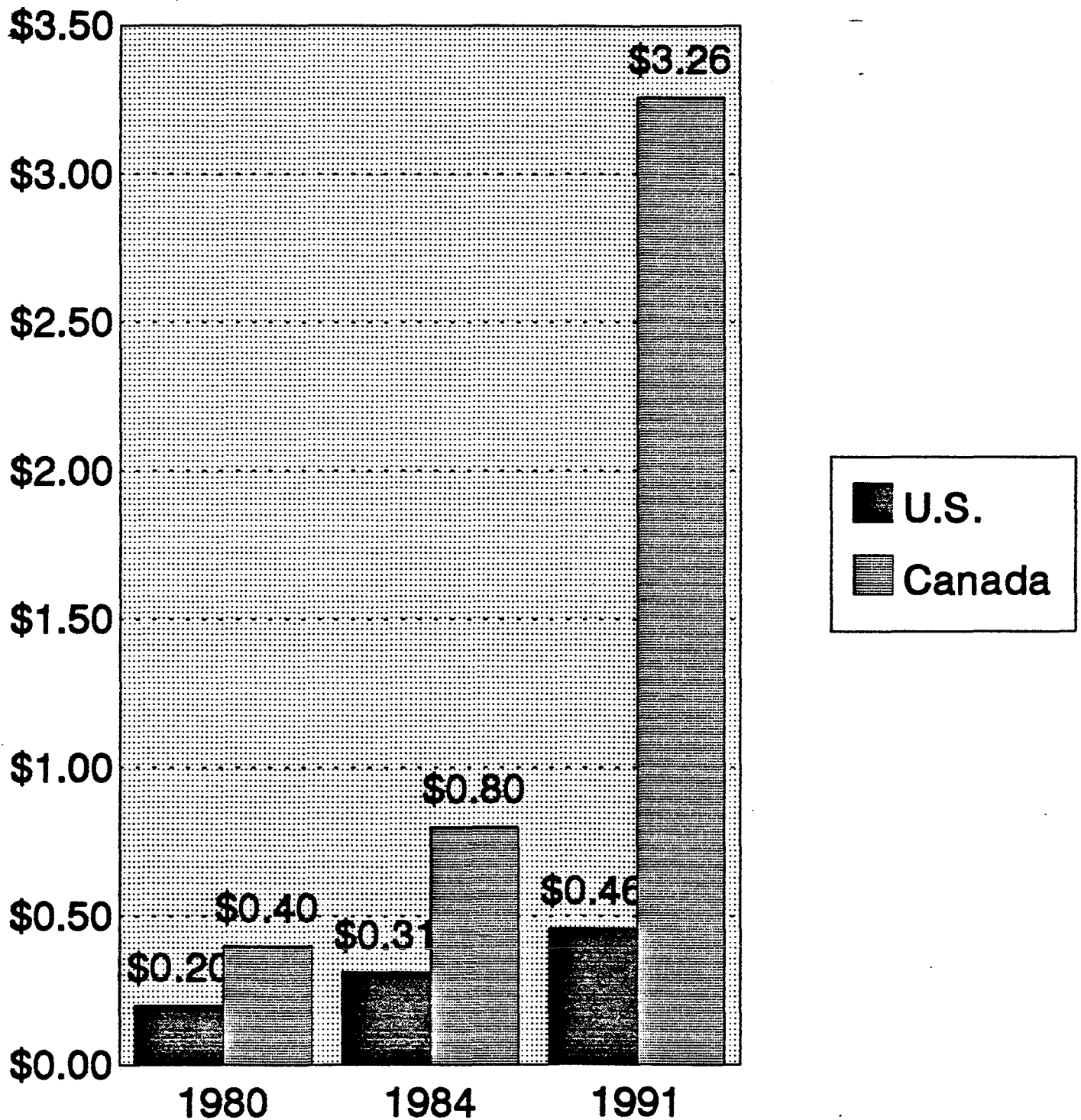
The addictive drug called tobacco--mainly cigarettes--, is the number one cause of violence in the United States. From a Public Health perspective, it is important to identify factors which allow this epidemic to continue and to find a cure for it.

Canada, our neighbor to the north, has made much more progress on this front in the past decade than the United States as shown in the two accompanying charts from a previous study. The first shows that the will of the public to fight the tobacco epidemic, expressed through their elected representatives, has resulted in a series of drastic increases in total Federal and provincial cigarette taxes, such that by 1991, Canadian per pack cigarette taxes had risen to \$3.26 (U.S. dollars) compared with our taxes of \$0.46 per pack. less than one-seventh as high as the Canadian tax.

The second chart shows the impact of this sharp increase in taxes in Canada. In 1983, before the start of the largest Canadian cigarette tax increase, the per capita consumption of manufactured cigarettes in Canada and the U.S was almost identical. But by 1991 there had been a decrease in consumption in Canada of 31.9%, almost twice as much as the 17.8% decrease in the United States. Thus, at this point, there are already tens of thousands or more Americans who are doomed to die from cigarette-caused diseases who would live had this country adopted the stronger tobacco control policies of Canada and kept them away from cigarettes.

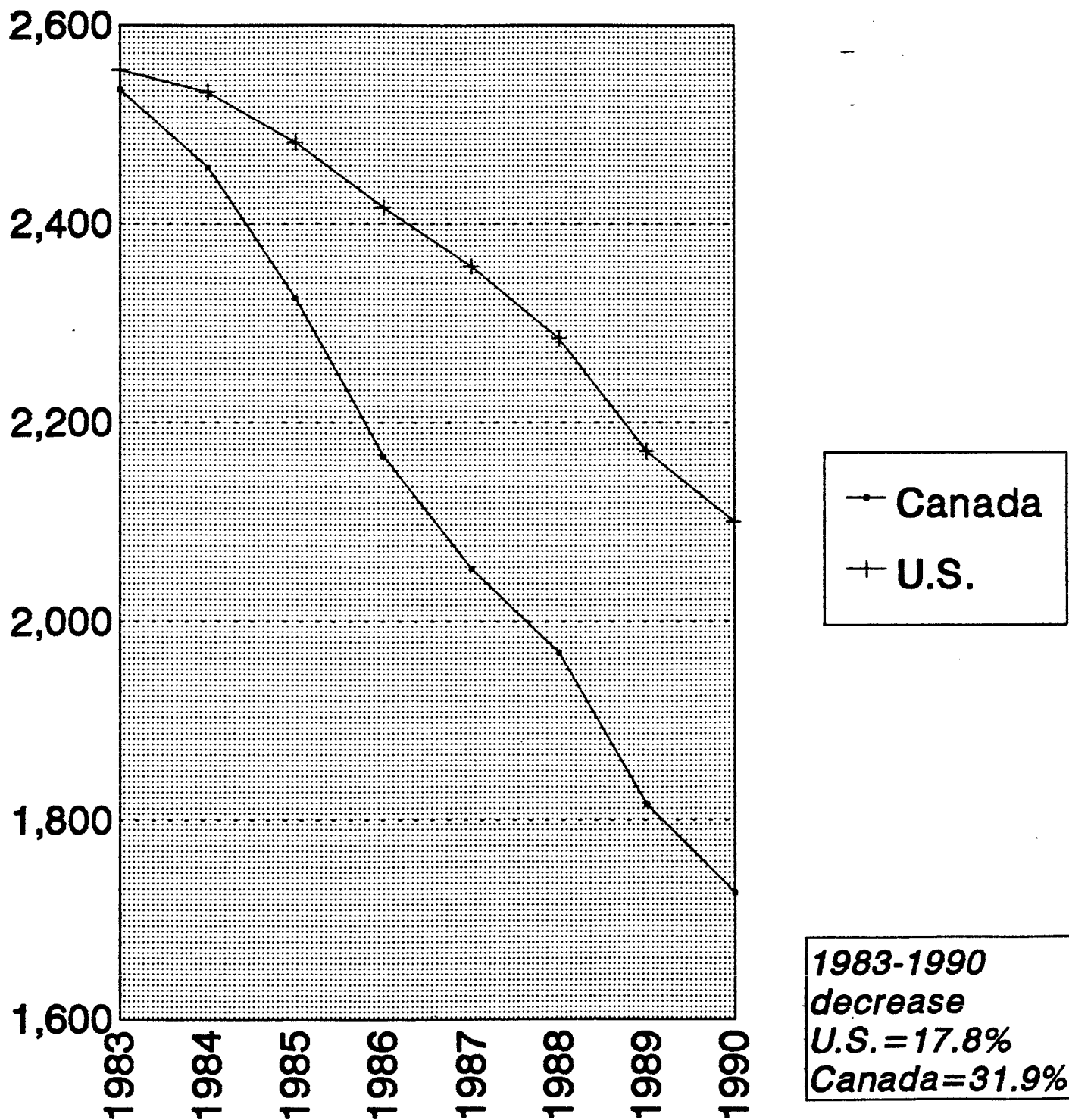
None of the bills introduced in the last two congresses to significantly increase the Federal excise tax on tobacco have passed and the results of today's study show why the American tobacco epidemic has not been better controlled. The fact that tobacco money buys pro-tobacco results is clear, consistent and undeniable. The battle to stop the poisoning of prevention of tobacco death and disease is a battle in which the public's health is pitted against the deadly profits of the tobacco industry. How much longer will it take for the public's health to prevail?

Total U.S. and Canadian Cigarette Taxes per Pack in U.S. dollars



data from Non-Smokers' Rights Association (Canada)
analyzed by Public Citizen's Health Research Group and the Advocacy Institute

Per Capita Manufactured Cigarette Consumption in Canada and the U.S.



Data from the Tobacco Products Section, Health and Welfare Canada, Courtesy of Dr. Murray Kaiserman

UCSF NEWS

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EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE:
9 AM (PDT), WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1993

STUDY: TOBACCO INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE EFFECT ON LEGISLATORS' VOTES

SAN FRANCISCO -- The tobacco industry's campaign contributions appear to be influencing voting patterns of California legislators on tobacco control issues, according to a statistical analysis by UC San Francisco researchers.

The researchers developed a statistical model that considered dollars to legislators from the tobacco industry, the public's attitudes toward smoking and tobacco control, and legislators' voting records as rated (0-10 scale) by pro-health and tobacco control advocates.

They found legislators became more "pro-tobacco industry" as they received more campaign contributions: A legislator's "tobacco policy score" dropped 0.11 for every \$1,000 received from the tobacco industry. The UCSF study did not rate or single out individual legislators.

"Constituent attitudes, which strongly supported tobacco control, did not seem to be reflected in legislators' behavior," said Stanton A. Glantz, PhD, UCSF professor of medicine and a researcher at the UCSF Institute for Health Policy Studies. "This failure in representation may be the result of the tobacco industry to persuade legislators not to support tobacco control policies."

The UCSF study was presented today (October 27) at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association. Michael Begay, PhD, was co-author of the study.

In previous studies, Glantz and Begay have documented a steep increase in tobacco industry campaign contributions since the 1988 passage of Proposition 99, which raised the tobacco tax by 25 cents and directed 20 percent of the revenues go to tobacco education and prevention programs. The California Legislature and the Governor are charged with appropriating those funds and implementing the programs.

(more)

Dailed and transmitted: 10/25/93

AE:tabindustry

