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January 9, 2008

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## California Gets Mixed Grades in Tobacco Report Card

**--Californians Largely Protected from Secondhand Smoke; State Fails to Make Proper Investment to Reduce Disease and Death**

**Public Report Access after Embargo:**

<http://www.stateoftobaccocontrol.org>

**Listen to the 2007 State of Tobacco Control Statewide News Conference:**

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**(Sacramento, CA, Embargoed Until 12:01 a.m. (EST), January 10, 2008)** California scored a range of grades from A to F in the American Lung Association's State of Tobacco Control 2007 report, which highlighted success in smokefree air and youth access and detailed challenges regarding the state's cigarette tax and tobacco prevention and control spending.

The annual American Lung Association report card grades each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico on four key tobacco control policies: smokefree air laws, cigarette tax, tobacco prevention spending and youth access laws. In addition, the report grades federal tobacco control efforts, including: cigarette tax, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulation of tobacco products, cessation policies and ratification of the international tobacco control treaty.

California received a D grade for cigarette taxes, an A grade for smokefree air, an F grade for tobacco prevention spending, and an A grade for youth access.

"Clearly, we have scored some victories in protecting Californians from tobacco addiction, but this is an ongoing and uphill battle, as California's cigarette tax and tobacco prevention and control spending remain a challenge," said Jim Wilgus, president and CEO of the American Lung Association of California. "We know what policies work to protect people's health and save lives. Now it's time for state and local leaders to summon the political will to do what's right and put saving lives at the top of their priority list."

Grading for tobacco prevention spending is based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) 1999 Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs, which recommended that California spend \$165 million per year on tobacco control and prevention spending. During fiscal year 2008, California's tobacco control program funding was only \$79 million (including 2007 funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

Raising cigarette taxes prevents kids from starting to smoke and has motivated thousands of Americans to quit smoking, and California's grade is based on its 87-cent-per-pack tax. Studies show that for every 10 percent increase in the cost of a pack of cigarettes, there is a seven percent decline in youth consumption. Currently, the average state cigarette tax nationwide is \$1.11 per pack, an increase of about 11 cents from last year. California ranks 29th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The state's grade for youth access reflects enactment and enforcement of policies that restrict the sale and distribution of tobacco products to minors, despite the tobacco industry's continued tactics to lure young smokers. The tobacco companies are launching new products such as Camel No. 9 with pink and green packaging - which are clearly targeted toward young girls and teens, and by continuing to sell candy-flavored cigarettes.

"Despite all of our efforts, tobacco remains a significant public health challenge for our state," said David Burns, MD, an American Lung Association of California volunteer. "Tobacco is killing us."

More than 37,000 people in California die each year from diseases caused by cigarette smoking. Tobacco-related illness kills more than 438,000 Americans every year.

Grades for federal issues-FDA regulation of tobacco products, cigarette tax, cessation policies, and the international tobacco control treaty-still score only Ds and Fs. Congress, however, is poised to pass the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act to give the FDA oversight over tobacco products, legislation that will curb the marketing of cigarettes to children and teens.

Data released in 2007 detailed the tobacco industry's spending, including approximately \$36 million a day (\$13.1 billion annually) in marketing, in addition to \$1.7 million in direct contributions to federal candidates and \$96 million supplied to state-level candidates, committees and ballot measure campaigns during the 2005 and 2006 election cycle. Despite signing a settlement agreement with state Attorneys General in October 2006 prohibiting the marketing of candy, fruit, and alcohol-flavored cigarettes, RJ Reynolds violated the spirit of the agreement by introducing a new line of flavored cigarettes barely seven months later; survey data has shown that these products are favored by smokers aged 17 to 19.

During 2007, two major public health reports-from the President's Cancer Panel and the Institute of Medicine-heralded the need for the federal and state governments to take urgent action to reduce America's tobacco epidemic.

The American Lung Association has helped millions of Americans quit smoking through its Lung HelpLine 1.800.LUNG.USA, and through its smoking cessation programs, including Freedom From Smoking®, considered to be the "gold standard" of group-setting, smoking cessation programs and Not on Tobacco, or N-O-T, a nationally recognized smoking cessation program for youth.

The full State of Tobacco Control 2007 report can be viewed at: <http://www.stateoftobaccocontrol.org>

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## **About the American Lung Association**

Beginning our second century, the American Lung Association is the leading organization working to prevent lung disease and promote lung health. Lung disease death rates continue to increase while other leading causes of death have declined. The American Lung Association funds vital research on the causes of and treatments for lung disease. With the generous support of the public, the American Lung Association is "*Improving life, one breath at a time.*" For more information about the American Lung Association or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) or log on to [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org).

Call 1-800-LUNG-USA to connect automatically to your local American Lung Association office.

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