



United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

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FLORIDA

November 13, 2003

Hon. John McCain
Chairman
Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science and Transportation
508 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Ernest Fritz Hollings
Ranking Minority Member
Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science and Transportation
508 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman and Senator Hollings:

I write to request that the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation conduct an investigation into the implementation and enforcement of a provision included in the 1998 State Tobacco Settlement that banned payments by tobacco companies to film studios for the purpose of placing products in movies and the trailers used to advertise them.

Yesterday, the Senate Commerce Committee held a hearing on how states are spending the funds they receive through the Multi-State Settlement Agreement (MSA). During the course of that hearing, Dr. Cheryl Heaton, President and CEO of the American Legacy Foundation, shared some alarming information suggesting the need to investigate further whether there has been any exchange of goods and services between the movie producers and the tobacco companies in return for the appearance of specific tobacco products in movies.

A study completed by the American Legacy Foundation earlier this year found that movies that showed specific brands of tobacco products were four times more likely to include smoking in the movie trailer. This statistically significant finding reinforces the need for this inquiry. These advertising trailers are often seen on television where tobacco advertising has been banned since 1970.

It is a fact that adolescents are impressionable and what they see in movies may influence their actions. Smoking is no exception. A study published in the British journal The Lancet in June concludes that exposure to smoking in movies has been linked with increased rates of smoking by adolescents. The researchers estimate that over 50 percent of 10-14 year-olds who started smoking did so after seeing it in movies.

Again, I respectfully request that the Committee conduct an investigation, including hearings, into whether the provisions banning payments from tobacco companies to movie producers is being properly executed. As part of this investigation the Committee should also examine whether the appearance of smoking in movie trailers indirectly circumvents the ban on tobacco advertising on television. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,