

statistics cigarettes 1998CRH3298B ORIGINAL COSPONSORSHIP OF H.R. 3868, THE BIPARTISAN NO TOBACCO FOR KIDS

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Archive-Name: gov/us/fed/congress/record/1998/may/14/1998CRH3298B From the Congressional Record Online via GPO Access ORIGINAL COSPONSORSHIP OF H.R. 3868, THE BIPARTISAN NO TOBACCO FOR KIDS ACT OF 1998 The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California, Mr. Bilbray, is recognized five minutes. Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for H.R. 3868, the Bipartisan No Tobacco for Kids Act of 1998. This legislation, which was authored by my colleagues, Representatives James Hansen and Marty Meehan, is aimed exclusively at preventing kids from smoking and reducing the adverse health effects of tobacco on children. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 3,000 kids each day become regular cigarette smokers. In light of recent statistics that shows youth smoking on the rise, I believe it is imperative that we act assertively here in Congress to crack down on youth smoking and access to tobacco. Before I came to Washington, D.C., I served on the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and was responsible for passing one of the most stringent anti-smoking ordinances in the country. Because of my prior commitment to and involvement with this issue at the local level, and the startling statistics that show youth smoking on the rise, I am only too glad to support H.R. 3868 as an original cosponsor. H.R. 3868 is the only anti-tobacco bill in Congress (including the Senate) which has received the endorsement of former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop and former Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner David Kessler. In fact, Koop and Kessler stated that other bills in both the House and Senate do not go far enough to reduce and prevent youth smoking. This legislation establishes strong financial disincentives for tobacco companies that do not reduce tobacco consumption by minors by specified target dates. It has the stated goal of reducing tobacco use by children by 80 percent over the next ten years. This provision allows each tobacco manufacturer to determine the manner in which it will reach this mandatory goal. Federal requirements will apply only if the manufacturers are unable to achieve the reduction goals on their own. H.R. 3868 includes an increase of \$1.50 per cigarette pack, which will provide a financial disincentive for youth tobacco consumption. In addition, H.R. 3868 codifies the FDA provision from last summer's tobacco settlement that provides the FDA authority to regulate nicotine as a drug or a drug delivery device. This provision of the bill also contains added restrictions on advertising and marketing to youth. H.R. 3868 contains a provision to prohibit smoking in public buildings and facilities, and it authorizes funding for essential federal tobacco education and prevention programs. In addition, the majority of the revenue generated from this legislation will be used to pay down the federal debt. While H.R. 3868 does not provide any special liability protections for the tobacco industry, it does offer to settle pending state tobacco lawsuits, such as the one recently settled in Minnesota. I believe that this legislation will help to create an adequate "firewall" to protect public health and discourage and prevent youth tobacco smoking and possession. I feel very strongly that we should not tolerate youth smoking in our society with a "wink and a nod." We should treat teenage smoking as harshly as we would teenage drinking. As the father of two young children, I have a personal stake in passing this important legislation and helping to ensure that our kids do not develop this deadly habit. Statistics by the American Journal of Public Health show that minors illegally purchase 256 million packs of cigarettes each year. Our findings show that only 20 states have laws prohibiting tobacco possession by minors. We need to encourage states and localities to adopt and comply with strong anti-possession laws. The need for minor possession laws is illustrated by a CDC finding that 62 percent of minors who smoke say they buy their own cigarettes. In fact, I would support legislative efforts to require states to outlaw tobacco possession by minors as a condition of receiving federal funds. Mr. Speaker, my father died of lung cancer at the age of 53 due to his smoking habit. All three of my brothers smoke. There is little I can do to change that; however, I can do something to prevent my five children from starting to smoke. H.R. 3868 accomplishes these goals. Congress cannot afford to sit idly by and do nothing while thousands of children pick up their first cigarette every day and begin this deadly habit. I commend Representatives Hansen and Meehan for initiating this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 3868, and build upon the bipartisan coalition of Members committed to preventing and reducing youth smoking.

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