



APPEAL

Why should AAPI organizations give up their tobacco industry monies?

Health

Tobacco use is a worldwide epidemic. There is not one product that results in more deaths per year than cigarettes. In the U.S., 430,000 persons die from tobacco-related diseases, and it is roughly estimated that more than 15,000 Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) will die from tobacco-related diseases. Tobacco use is not only a tremendous problem in the U.S., but also abroad. In China alone, the number of tobacco related deaths will climb to more than 1 million deaths each year.

Cost

Tobacco results in not only a high mortality, but also in morbidity and loss in work productivity. It is estimated that tobacco results in a \$100 billion loss per year from medical costs and productivity loss from early death and disease.

Civil Rights

The tobacco industry specifically targets their products to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (and other minority groups) in the U.S. and overseas. Studies showed that in some California cities there was a higher percentage of cigarette billboards and advertising in AAPI neighborhoods than other ethnic neighborhoods. Targeting specific ethnic groups for a product that the industry knows can result in death is an infringement on civil rights. It is especially important for AAPI and other minority civil rights organizations to lead the fight against what the tobacco industry is doing to our communities.

Policy

The ability to enact strong tobacco control and prevention measures can be compromised by receiving tobacco industry monies. Many U.S. Congresspersons have received substantial campaign contributions from the tobacco industry;

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this can impact their votes on tobacco and health legislation. Prominent national and local Chinese American organizations and individuals who have a relationship with the tobacco industry may also find it difficult to speak out against the tobacco industry.

Youth

Tobacco industry papers revealed that they were intentionally targeting youth to replace the adult smokers who have died. Their advertising is so effective, that more 3-6 year olds recognized the Old Joe (Camel cigarette cartoon character) logo than the Mickey Mouse logo. We must recognize that the continuing relationship with the tobacco industry ultimately impacts the future of our youth.

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¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1997.

² Wildey MB, Young RL, et al. Cigarette point-of-sale advertising in ethnic neighborhoods in San Diego, California. *Health Values* 1992; 16 (1): 23-28.

³ Fischer PM, Schwartz MP, et al. Brand logo recognition by children aged 3 to 6 years. *JAMA* 1991; 266(22): 3145-8.