

Home

CAMPAIGN
for
TOBACCO-FREE
Kids

Press Releases

Press Releases

TITLE: COMBINATION OF TOBACCO MONEY AND PRO-TOBACCO VOTES COULD PROVE DAMAGING FOR CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES

DATE: 07/16/1998

CONTACT: Jennifer Thorp 202-296-5469/ Brian Bernhardt 202-289-5900

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington, DC (July 16, 1998) - New polling data released today by the CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS show the combination of accepting tobacco campaign contributions and opposition to a national tobacco control policy may be lethal for candidates in the fall elections. By nearly a 7 to 1 margin, voters are much more likely to vote for a candidate who refuses tobacco money and supports a national tobacco control policy than one who takes tobacco contributions and opposes such a policy. This trend is particularly strong among women voters, according to the survey.

"This poll provides a clear view of the political liability candidates could face this fall over the tobacco issue," said Bill Novelli, CAMPAIGN president. "Senators are now on record either standing with America's kids or standing with the tobacco industry. Those who opposed the national policy in the form of the McCain bill and also took significant tobacco money will face particularly intense voter reaction."

The survey shows continued strong support for a national tobacco control policy, with 75 percent favoring and only 21 percent opposing when given basic information about what comprehensive legislation would include.

The survey also shows that 39 percent of voters are more likely to vote for the candidate who supports the national policy, versus only 17 percent who would vote for the candidate who opposes such a policy.

When tobacco money is added to the equation, the impact on voting intention is even more dramatic. By a 40 percent margin (47% vs. 7%), voters are more likely to support the candidate who refuses tobacco money and supports a national tobacco control policy over the candidate who takes the money and opposes such a policy. What is most striking is the intensity of these views: nearly 30 percent of voters are much more likely to vote for the candidate refusing money and supporting tobacco control policy, while less than five percent were much more supportive of the pro-tobacco candidate.

Last week, the CAMPAIGN released a scorecard detailing

2077266811

each Senator's votes on the McCain tobacco control legislation that was recently shelved by the full Senate, as well as tobacco PAC contributions each Senator has accepted over the last decade. The McCain bill contained similar provisions as those outlined in the CAMPAIGN voter survey. The bill was a comprehensive approach to tobacco control that would have imposed restrictions on youth access to tobacco, curtailed advertising that has the greatest influence on kids, created a national public education campaign, raised the price of cigarettes to discourage tobacco use among children, confirmed the authority of the FDA to regulate tobacco, and more. The McCain bill, or other tobacco legislation, could still be considered during the remainder of this congressional session.

The scorecard showed a strong link between votes against the McCain bill and acceptance of tobacco campaign contributions. For the period of January 1, 1987 through the first quarter of 1998, the average tobacco contribution accepted by Senators opposing the McCain legislation was four times as much as was received by those who supported the bill: \$34,083 compared to \$8,108.

Tobacco political action committee (PAC) contributions from January 1, 1987 through March 31, 1998 total \$2,033,579 to current U.S. Senators and \$5,301,574 to current House Members.

"The tobacco industry has bought a temporary victory in the Congress," said Novelli. "But the American public is now saying that those who were influenced by political contributions and who successfully killed the bill may be in for a tough ride this November. There is still time this year for members of Congress to declare their independence from Big Tobacco and to work for comprehensive legislation that protects kids and saves lives."

The poll also shows a significant increase in support among female voters for those candidates who refuse tobacco money and support a national tobacco control policy. More than 52 percent of women voters would be more likely to vote for the candidate who refuses tobacco money and supports a tobacco control policy, compared to less than 7 percent who would support the candidate who takes tobacco money and opposes such a policy.

"Female voters are an important group for both political parties," continued Novelli. "This poll shows that protecting kids from tobacco will be a critical issue for women in the upcoming elections."

The national survey of 835 registered voters was conducted July 6-8, 1998 by Market Facts' TeleNation. The full sample has a margin of error of +/-3.5 percentage points.

The Washington, DC-based CAMPAIGN FOR

2077266812

TOBACCO-FREE KIDS is the largest initiative ever undertaken to decrease youth tobacco use in the United States. Its mandate is to focus the nation's attention and action on keeping tobacco marketing from seducing children, and making tobacco less accessible to kids.

A copy of the poll summary is attached. The scorecard may be viewed via the CAMPAIGN's website at www.tobaccofreekids.org. Copies are also available upon request.

July Poll Summary

CAMPAIGN for TOBACCO-FREE Kids™

1-800-284-KIDS info@tobaccofreekids.org

Best viewed with Internet Explorer 3.0 or Netscape 2.0 or higher.

© 1997 National Center for Tobacco-Free Kids © OrigSys, Incorporated

2077266813