

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 8, 2015

President Tom J. Donohue
United States Chamber of Commerce
600 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20208

Dear President Donohue:

As United States Senators who have long fought to protect the health of our constituents, we were greatly disturbed to read in a recent *New York Times* article that your organization has been engaged in a global campaign to thwart critical public health efforts to curb tobacco use.¹ In light of the recent decision by CVS Health to end its membership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, we urge you to reconsider the Chamber's advocacy on behalf of the tobacco industry. For the Chamber to use its international clout to fight so ardently against regulations of dangerous tobacco products is contrary to United States foreign policy and global health goals. As CVS Health has shown, protecting public health is good business, and the Chamber's actions are antithetical to good corporate citizenship.

Countries seeking to preserve the health and safety of their citizens and reduce tobacco-related deaths should not be stymied or intimidated by an outside lobbying force – especially one that represents many American businesses. Indeed, Chamber member companies should be concerned that their good names and the international business climate are being damaged because of your organization's efforts. In particular, your hospital and health-insurer members should be alarmed that the Chamber's advocacy could undermine their goals and worsen the health of millions. We are pleased to see that CVS Health has withdrawn its membership in the Chamber continuing its leadership in showing that protecting public health is good business.

Your response to the *New York Times* report – stating that the Chamber simply seeks to “uphold intellectual property rights, adhere to international commitments, and promulgate rules that are sensible and effective”² – provides scant comfort to the governments or populations that have been negatively impacted by the Chamber's pro-tobacco advocacy. Policies such as plain-packaging requirements, graphic warnings, excise taxes, and other proven means of reducing tobacco-related deaths and illnesses should be allowed to proceed without interference from the Chamber. In light of tobacco's well-documented and destructive effects, your assertions that

¹ Danny Hakim, “U.S. Chamber of Commerce Works Globally to Fight Antismoking Measures,” *New York Times*, June 30, 2015, available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/01/business/international/us-chamber-works-globally-to-fight-antismoking-measures.html?_r=0

² U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Blog Post, “Clearing the Smoke Around the Chamber's Tobacco Related Advocacy,” July 1, 2015, available at: <https://www.uschamber.com/blog/clearing-smoke-around-chamber-s-tobacco-related-advocacy>

these public-health measures should be combated because they somehow “undermine trademarks or brands” are simply unfounded.

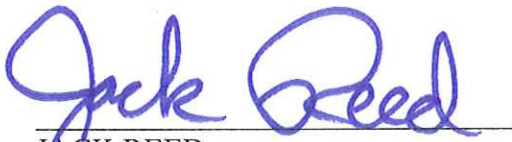
The Chamber’s actions to undermine public-health measures directed at reducing the death and disease caused by tobacco products are a serious threat to people around the world. We urge you to reconsider and to refocus your efforts in a more positive direction.



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate



RICHARD J. DURBIN
United States Senate



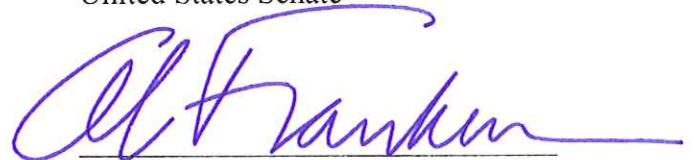
JACK REED
United States Senate



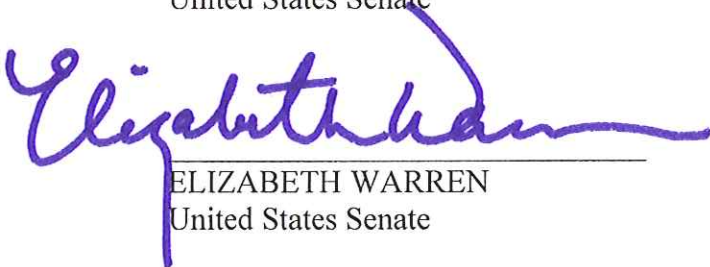
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