
Truth Initiative Statement on Reagan-Udall Foundation Evaluation of FDA's Tobacco Program

Statement of Robin Koval, CEO and President, Truth Initiative

WASHINGTON, D.C. (December 20, 2022) – We applaud the Food and Drug Administration and FDA Commissioner Dr. Robert Califf's leadership in taking the necessary step of [commissioning external experts](#) to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the agency's Center for Tobacco Products (CTP). The [report](#) issued this week from the Reagan-Udall Foundation identifies operational improvements needed to ensure CTP can effectively do the full breadth of its work to develop policy, issue regulations, conduct research, decide whether new tobacco products or claims can be marketed, and educate Americans on tobacco products. It is vitally important that CTP has the ability to perform these duties to the highest standard because, as the report states, when it comes to tobacco, it "is regulating products that have no inherent benefit and huge societal costs."

A key recommendation in the report concerns enforcement, which is especially critical as tobacco companies have continued to flood the market with new products and apparently little fear of federal reprisal. As youth vaping remains at epidemic levels and a serious public health threat – the 2022 National Youth Tobacco Survey from CDC showed that 2.5 million middle and high school students reported current e-cigarette use – the tobacco industry has been playing a dangerous game of "catch me if you can" with the FDA at the expense of young people's physical and mental health. The report identifies the importance of working with other entities, such as the Department of Justice, on strategies to clear the market of illegal tobacco products with more speed and transparency. We could not agree more. The industry is gaming the system and the FDA, along with its governmental partners like DOJ, need to change the game plan as the application volume and flood of new products illegally on the market have become untenable.

As the FDA works to address these recommendations, we must not lose sight of the tobacco industry's role in creating and perpetuating many of the challenges outlined in the report. The industry continues its well-documented playbook of aggressively thwarting the will of voters, states and localities, and the FDA at every turn with lawsuits, lobbying, and massive advertising campaigns designed to distract attention away from their business building and profit protection programs. To truly improve the way the FDA regulates tobacco products and protects the public health, the tobacco industry must stop impeding the agency's efforts and wasting taxpayer dollars.



About Truth Initiative®

Truth Initiative is a national public health organization dedicated to achieving a culture where all young people reject smoking, vaping and nicotine and a future where tobacco and nicotine addiction are a thing of the past. In 2020, we celebrated 20 years of saving lives and preventing millions of youth from smoking. Our impact has helped drive the teen smoking rate down from 23% in 2000 to under 3% in 2021. The truth about tobacco and the tobacco industry are at the heart of our proven-effective and nationally recognized **truth**® public education campaign. As youth e-cigarette use threatens to addict a new generation to nicotine, we are leading the fight against tobacco and nicotine addiction in all forms. Our rigorous scientific research and policy studies, community and youth engagement programs supporting populations at high risk of using tobacco, and innovation in tobacco dependence treatment are also helping to end one of the most critical public health battles of our time. Based in Washington D.C., our organization, formerly known as the American Legacy Foundation, was established and funded through the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement between attorneys general from 46 states, five U.S. territories and the tobacco industry. To learn more, visit truthinitiative.org.

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