

February 12, 2017

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Dear Chairwoman Tyson and Members of the Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation,

The American Lung Association is asking that you support Senate Bill 175 to reduce the burden on tobacco and save lives by a \$1.50 tax increase on cigarettes and other tobacco products. In Kansas, tobacco use claims 4,400 adult lives each year while 13,200 kids try cigarettes for the first time. For every Kansan that ultimately dies from tobacco use, there are 20 more suffering from tobacco-related diseases and disability. Lung disease is the third leading cause of death in the U.S. The American Lung Association supports a \$1.50 tax increase because:

- **Increasing the price of tobacco is one of the most effective methods for preventing and reducing tobacco use.** Every 10 percent increase in the real price of tobacco reduces smoking prevalence by 1.5 percent and overall cigarette consumption by approximately 3 to 5 percent.
- **Increasing the price of tobacco is one of the most effective methods for preventing youth initiation and use among young adults.** Every 10 percent increase in the real price of tobacco reduces the number of youth who smoke by more than 5 percent, and the number of youth who start smoking by 10 percent. Youth are two to three times more responsive to price increases, and are more likely to quit or cut back on smoking in order to avoid paying more for cigarettes. In a recent study of Minnesota youth and young adults, 76 percent of those who had smoked in the past 30 days reported being aware of a 75-cent price increase. Among the same group of smokers, 16.7 percent reported quit attempts and 24.1 percent reported reducing smoking because of the price increase.
- **Certain smokers are more responsive to changes in the price of cigarettes.** Cigarette price and tax increases have been shown to reduce smoking among males, African Americans and Chicanos Latinos. Pregnant women are also more likely to reduce or quit smoking when tobacco prices rise.

On behalf of the American Lung Association, we would ask that you please support a \$1.50 tax increase. If you have further questions please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Leah Martin
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American Lung Association
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Please remember the American Lung Association in your will or trust.