

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Colleague:

March 30, 2001

HHS Secretary Thompson Supports FDA Regulation of Tobacco

Last year, the United States Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that although tobacco may be the cause of one of the country's gravest public health problems, "Congress has clearly precluded the FDA from asserting jurisdiction to regulate tobacco products."

This week, Secretary Tommy Thompson repeated his opinion regarding the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) authority to regulate tobacco. "Speaking for myself, I think tobacco should be regulated," Thompson said, adding, "I have not discussed it with the White House." Thompson said he favors preventing tobacco companies from targeting young people through advertising, stating, "There's no question there's a constitutional right to free speech. There is no constitutional right to infringe on children."

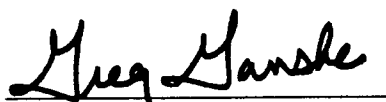
Secretary Thompson has clearly expressed support for the goal of our bill, H.R. 1097, the FDA Tobacco Authority Amendments Act of 2001, and that goal is simply restoring FDA's authority to regulate tobacco. While this is not an indication of the Bush administration's position, we are encouraged by the Secretary's acknowledgment of the severity of the public health problem associated with tobacco use.

We look forward to working with the Administration on our bill, which has been endorsed by the major public health organizations focused on this issue, including the American Heart and Lung Associations, the American Cancer Society, the American Medical Association, and the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids.

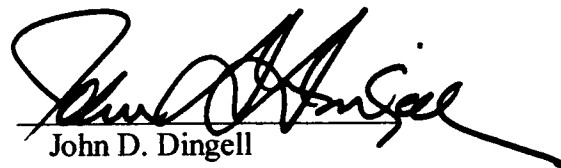
It is up to Congress to provide strong protections for America's families and children. Our bill will simply do what the Supreme Court suggested – that Congress explicitly give FDA the jurisdiction to regulate tobacco. It is not a tax bill. It does not ban tobacco or tobacco products.

Please read the article on the next page for more on Secretary Thompson's statements. To cosponsor our bill or for more information, please contact Adam Chrisney (225-4426) or John Ford (226-3400). Thank you.

Sincerely,



Greg Ganske
Member of Congress



John D. Dingell
Member of Congress