

Heritage Editorial

Henry Waxman cuts 'big tobacco' down to size

By Herb Brin

Hooray for Henry Waxman. One man (short in stature — but mighty tall) has brought "big tobacco" down to its knees.

And in the process, he's demolished a number of smartass radio talk show hosts of the "conservative" persuasion who had all the answers about smoking in America — except the truth.

This week, our very special friend Henry A. Waxman wrote in the Los Angeles Times that "the tobacco companies always have an end game."

He denounced the "Faustian" bargain being sought by the tobacco companies that would transform defeat "into an unthinkable victory."

As Waxman explains it: "...the companies are willing to curtail their efforts to sell cigarettes to our children only on the condition that they receive absolute legal immunity for the deaths tobacco causes."

Waxman describes the move to be "a brilliant maneuver" that would block the Food and Drug Administration from regulating nicotine or requiring the companies to make safer cigarettes.

"We shouldn't have to pay drug dealers not to sell drugs, and we shouldn't have to

offer immunity and regulatory relief to tobacco companies to get them to stop addicting our children," he wrote.

I lost a brother to emphysema. When he discovered it, my brother Robert was a gonner.

Waxman points out that "tobacco use will kill about 25 million Americans alive today."

Let the snide talk show hosts, the fardarters of the rights of man, live with that statistic.

The congressman, who has emerged as Congress' single most tenacious fighter against the tobacco interests, wrote that Big Tobacco, under the terms of the proposed settlement "would be required to pay a pittance" — less than \$15,000 — for each of the 25 million American deaths attributed to smoking.

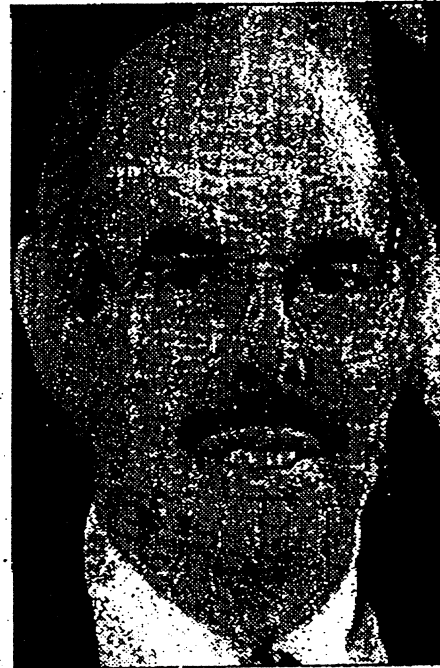
Waxman adds:

Never before has a manufacturer of consumer products been given blanket immunity from future liabilities.

Never before has a manufacturer of an inherently dangerous product been exempted from future regulations that could make the product safer.

Waxman, a Los Angeles Democrat, is a member of the House Commerce Committee's subcommittee on health.

□
Anne White, a student at the University



of Delaware, revealed in a New York Times article that smoking characters — Joe Camel and the Marlboro Man — are being used to promote the sale of American cigarettes in overseas markets.

She noted that she encountered Joe Camel and the Marlboro Man everywhere while studying for seven months in Senegal. There, the cancer-producing products are marketed as offering a piece of America if the young people of Africa

would smoke them. Which they do.

Anything to hook another human being on the killing tobacco habit.

Meanwhile, George Dessart, chairman of the board of the American Cancer Society, asks in a New York Times full-page "open letter to the American public":

"Tobacco deals — will they protect our children? Or is it about money?"

The American Cancer Society says pointedly in the letter:

"Big Tobacco can no longer be allowed to lie and deceive the American public about tobacco-related death and disease. In typical fashion, they are attempting to deal."

The cancer society's chairman added that the nation "is in a health crisis due to tobacco.

"The tobacco industry must be held accountable for the damage they've consciously caused and will continue to cause. The real issue here is now to preserve the health and lives of our citizens."

Dessart declared in the advertisement that nicotine in tobacco is addictive and must be regulated as a drug by the FDA. Further, he wrote: "Big tobacco can no longer target our kids as new customers."

"We need to fund educational campaigns that tell the truth about tobacco addiction — with budgets that can effectively correct the lies Big Tobacco has planted over the last several decades," Dessart added.

This, then, is our HERITAGE editorial of the week.