

# Save Lives, Not Tobacco

*The Coalition for Accountability*

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **PUBLIC HEALTH, CONSUMER GROUPS TELL MCCAIN: COMMERCE TOBACCO BILL FAR TOO GENEROUS TO BIG TOBACCO**

WASHINGTON, D.C.—*Save Lives, Not Tobacco: The Coalition for Accountability*, the national coalition of more than 350 public health and consumer groups opposing any special legal protection for the tobacco industry, today delivered to Senator John McCain (R-AZ) organizational letters opposing his legislation as "far too generous to Big Tobacco."

The McCain bill, approved by Senate Commerce Committee before the industry withdrew from participation in the congressional effort to enact tobacco legislation, grants unprecedented legal protection to the tobacco industry.

*Save Lives* commends Senator Kent Conrad (D-ND), Chairman of the Senate Democratic Task Force on Tobacco, for his leadership in providing a forum for former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop, former U.S. Food and Drug Administration head Dr. David Kessler, and other public health and consumer leaders to comment on the various tobacco proposals.

"The Senate Commerce bill is too good for the tobacco industry and not good enough for the American people," said Michele Bloch, M.D., Ph.D., of the American Medical Women's Association, co-chair of *Save Lives'* Communications Committee. "Although the tobacco industry wants even more, this legislation would guarantee Big Tobacco special legal protections never accorded to any other industry, company, or individual in American history."

"The Commerce bill would limit the tobacco industry's liability for any future misconduct with annual caps that would apply even to punitive damages for egregious wrongdoing. This is simply another form of immunity that would allow the companies to pass along all the expenses of its wrongdoing to its customers as a cost of doing business, with no pain at all inflicted on the companies themselves," said Bill Godshall of Smoke-free Pennsylvania, co-chair of *Save Lives'* Advocacy Committee.

Under the McCain bill, complete immunity would be afforded to the parent corporations of the tobacco companies, to all corporate affiliates and foreign subsidiaries—giving the companies the protection they have craved for years—and to all industry agents, including attorneys who may have conspired to lie to the American people and their government.

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