

January 29, 1998

Bible Opening Remarks - House Commerce Committee

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I'm Geoff Bible. For the past three years I have been Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Philip Morris Companies.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the Committee today and to discuss with you the Proposed Resolution.

I am proud to represent the largest consumer-products company in the world and even prouder of our more than 150,000 employees. . . 70,000 in the United States alone. . . who develop, manufacture and market leading brands in the tobacco, food and beer industries.

Mr. Chairman, I'm here today to listen as well as to speak. I want to assure each member of the Committee that I know how important it is to engage in two-way discussion.

I recognize that the tobacco industry is the subject of intense criticism for its past actions and for its role in the social, political and legal controversy over tobacco products.

And many of the authors of this criticism I believe to be reasonable people.

We have arrived at today's hearing after 40 years of constant and increasingly angry litigation and conflict.

In many instances, we have operated as if we felt under a virtual state of siege, which too often has resulted in our failure to compromise, cooperate or embrace changes sought by our critics.

That failure has, in turn, led to more and even greater confrontation, without resolving any of the controversial issues.

In hindsight I wish that, years ago, I'd had the foresight to try and find common ground with our critics.