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*This spring, California voters weighed enacting the state's first tobacco tax hike in more than a decade. **LIVESTRONG** and other health advocates funded efforts to pass Proposition 29, which could result in massive anti-smoking behavior change and thousands of saved lives. And that's just the beginning.*

BY MARY ELLEN HANNIBAL

Where There's Smoke, There's Ire

IT'S TIME TO SNUFF OUT THE SMOKES.

This spring, Lance Armstrong and **LIVESTRONG** stepped up to stoke what Lance calls a “David vs. Goliath” campaign in California. In short, **LIVESTRONG** donated \$1.5 million toward Proposition 29, the California Cancer Research Act (CCRA). The American Cancer Society, American Heart Association and other anti-smoking advocates also opened their coffers, adding another \$7 million in support of the initiative.

If passed in June, the bill would increase the tax on every cigarette pack sold in the state by \$1 to \$1.87; the funds raised by the tax increase would provide up to \$735 million per year for research on heart disease, emphysema, and cancer. And the extra \$1 per pack would be very little to pay, California researchers say, for other health gains the bill would accrue: a predicted 11 percent decline in the number of smokers in the state, resulting in more than 4,000 lives saved between 2012 and 2016.

As Armstrong recently told reporters: “We feel that Prop. 29 will save lives, stop kids from smoking, prevent more children from starting, and make California the largest source of cancer research after the federal government.”

Even though **LIVESTRONG** is joined in this effort by former California State Senate President Pro Tem and cancer survivor Don Perata and some of the nation’s leading health groups, the David characterization is apt, since they are facing down the ultimate Goliath: the tobacco industry, which, along with its supporters, has raised \$40 million to fight Prop. 29. The last time California voters passed a cigarette tax increase was in 1998. More recent attempts such as one in 2006 failed to pass after tobacco companies poured \$66 million into killing the proposed tobacco tax increase.

THE HARD TRUTH

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in the U.S., and one in three cancer deaths is due to tobacco use. Lung cancer has outstripped breast cancer as the bigger killer of women, and 80 percent of lung cancer deaths are due to smoking. Over one billion people worldwide now smoke, as rates rise steeply in China and India, the world’s most populous countries. It would seem self-evident that tobacco use ought to be discouraged, but the tobacco industry has

been fighting such efforts for decades. Its zeal shows no sign of abating; in battle, it often wins.

This February, for instance, a federal judge declared unconstitutional a new Food and Drug Administration requirement that tobacco companies prominently display graphic warning labels on cigarette packages. The labels in question would have included a man exhaling smoke from a tracheotomy hole in his neck; another featured a mouth covered in cancerous lesions. Tobacco industry advocates claimed that the government aimed to use the packaging not to inform and educate consumers, but to advocate a *change in behavior*, which they argued went beyond the “compelled commercial speech” the courts have ruled permissible for protecting consumers from confusion and deception. Paul G. Billings, vice president of national policy and advocacy at the American Lung Association, responded: “This industry has been marketing its products to children for years in ways that have enticed them to use them—the Marlboro cowboy and Joe Camel—and what Congress said [or tried to say] was, fight back with all the same tools.”

Fighting back is just what some very powerful anti-smoking crusaders, including Armstrong, have been doing. New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who quit smoking 30 years ago, has long promoted his Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use. In his first term as mayor, Bloomberg, a **LIVESTRONG** supporter, outlawed smoking in bars and restaurants in the nation’s largest city. The World Health Organization has been a key Bloomberg partner, and in 2008 the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation added considerable heft to both of their efforts via targeted donations, especially to reduce tobacco use in developing countries, where lung cancer rates are projected to soar.

But in May, Bloomberg’s sights were set on California when he announced he would match donations in support of Prop. 29 up to \$500,000. “Every day, tobacco kills.

Right now Big Tobacco is pouring tens of millions into California to defeat a commonsense measure known as Prop. 29 that would help reduce tobacco use. Something has to be done about it,” Bloomberg said in a statement. Putting his money where his mouth is, Bloomberg told *LIVESTRONG Quarterly* in the Summer 2010 issue that he wanted to convince governments to pass laws that make it difficult to smoke. “We want governments to make it more expensive by taxing tobacco products,” he said.



SO SUE US

Beyond saving lives, Prop. 29 and related legislation have another significant aim: By cutting smoking rates, Prop. 29 has been projected to save \$5.1 billion in smoking-caused health care costs funded by the State of California. Moving beyond monetary savings, other public health benefits may arise. As an example, in 1994, during a large suit against the tobacco industry led by the attorneys general of several states, an anonymous whistle-blower from the Brown &

If passed, the anti-smoking bill would raise up to **\$735 MILLION EACH YEAR TO FUND RESEARCH AGAINST CANCER** and heart disease.

Williamson Tobacco Corporation leaked thousands of pages of confidential, internal documents to academics, the media, and Congress.

One recipient of these documents was Stanton Glantz, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), and co-leader of the Tobacco Control Program, UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, who recognized the implications of such a rare treasure trove. In order that the public would have total access to them, Professor Glantz passed along the documents to UCSF colleagues. Brown & Williamson sued to remove and recover the documents, but as part of a settlement agreement between the states and Big Tobacco, the court ruled in 1995 that the public had a “right to know.”

These leaked documents (many of which reveal hidden dangers of tobacco and nicotine plus untoward cigarette company strategies) form the bulk of the Legacy Tobacco Documents Library in San Francisco. This depository of 13 million documents—more than 70 million pages—houses the tobacco industry’s own scientific studies on nicotine’s addictive power and other negative health effects of tobacco smoke. Fascinating insights into the tobacco industry’s stratagems against its formidable foes are available to all, via a digital resource associated with UCSF. Here, readers and researchers can find such assets as an archived letter to R.J. Reynolds Tobacco company requesting that “50 branded rain slickers” be delivered to the set of the 1980s film *Romancing the Stone*, in exchange for “excellent visual identification” of Reynolds brands, including Winston. The filmmaker requesting the slickers notes they are needed for the crew to deal with weather conditions on the set.

Despite the legal settlement terms that spawned the library’s collection, the British American Tobacco company (BAT), for one, embarked on a course of obstruction and obfuscation in its messaging. For the record, in 2003, BAT produced 792 billion cigarettes. By 2025, the number of deaths worldwide related to tobacco use is expected to rise to 10 million per year, the lion’s share of which will occur in “emerging markets.” In March 2012, Bloomberg announced he would commit \$220 million of his personal wealth to fighting tobacco beyond California and around the world.

Whatever the fate of Prop. 29, in terms of potential effects of efforts of this type, it may help to look east, where, less than nine years after his anti-smoking crusade in New York City began, Bloomberg claims: “Today there are 350,000 fewer smokers in the city—which means 10,000 fewer smoking-related deaths.” That’s a start. ■

To view modern and formerly cloaked tobacco industry strategies and documents, visit legacy.library.ucsf.edu.

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MYQUIT COACH

THE iPHONE APP THAT CLEARS LUNGS.

AS SMOKERS AND CIGARETTE MAKERS KNOW FULL WELL, smoking is a powerful addiction. Its grip is both physical and social. Nicotine passes into the brain more quickly than most substances, according to David Kessler, M.D., former head of the FDA, providing a bigger, faster charge than chocolate or coffee. It signals the release of beta endorphins that make you feel calm and alert. Smoking is something people take a break to do, making it synonymous with rest, release of tension, and pleasure. Consider that a pack-a-day smoker will take more than 70,000 puffs per year, and each of those will be associated with friends and conviviality on the one hand, or quiet and solitude on the other.

LIVESTRONG.com offers an iPhone app (MyQuit Coach, \$3.99) that is there for you every minute you struggle with the pull. It provides a personalized plan for quitting smoking, which can be tailored to help those intent on quitting immediately or gradually. As the economists say, if you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it. And the MyQuit Coach helps you do both. You can track your cravings, and keep tabs on your progress in resisting them. You can access motivational messages like: “Smoking affects me and my loved ones,” “Now is the time,” and “Dare to quit smoking.” The app can’t do much for physical withdrawal symptoms, but it can help you move past them. While you keep your eye on the prize, the app can provide a physical replacement for the cigarette itself; instead of pulling out your pack, you pull out your phone. Lung cancer is the most preventable cancer, and the app will remind you that the power to quit is in your hands.

