

If truth[®] Dies It Will Not Die Alone

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(NAPSA)—Each day 4,000 12-



Joseph Califano

to 17-year-olds smoke their first cigarette. Eight out of 10 adult smokers began their cigarette habit before they turned 18; most in their pre- and early teens.

truth[®] is the largest national anti-smoking education campaign. It exposes teens to Big Tobacco's marketing and manufacturing manipulation, and highlights the effects of tobacco on society. By telling the truth about the tobacco industry, truth[®] helps teens make informed choices about tobacco use. truth[®] doesn't preach. truth[®] doesn't judge. truth[®] just works.

This past June, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) credited truth[®] with helping to cut youth smoking nationally. Unfortunately, truth[®] could be on the verge of extinction.

The 1998 Master Settlement Agreement with the four largest tobacco companies required them to pay a total of \$300 million a year to the Public Education Fund—which provides the financial resources to conduct truth[®]—as long as their total market share exceeded 99.05 percent.

Big Tobacco's total market share dipped slightly below this unreasonably high threshold, end-

ing the industry's legal requirement to make annual payments. Without the Public Education Fund money, truth[®] will die.

Although Big Tobacco's legal obligation to make payments to the Public Education Fund ended, their moral obligation has not, and will not until underage smoking is history. That's why all the former U.S. Secretaries of Health and Human Services and Health, Education and Welfare, U.S. Sur-

Keep the truth[®] campaign alive—visit www.ProtectTheTruth.org.



geons General, and Directors of the CDC formed The Citizens' Commission to Protect the Truth. The Commission has one goal—to keep truth[®] alive in order to end smoking by our nation's children and teens.

Maintaining the truth[®] campaign at its current level would cost only a penny-and-a-half per pack of the 20 billion packs of cigarettes sold each year in the United States.

We cannot let Big Tobacco destroy the most effective national campaign to curb smoking by children and teens. Every American can join our campaign to get Big Tobacco to put its resources behind its rhetoric by logging on to www.ProtectTheTruth.org, signing the petition and helping us protect the truth.

For more information on the commission or to sign the petition supporting the continuation of truth[®], visit www.ProtectTheTruth.org or send an e-mail to info@ProtectTheTruth.org.