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Tobacco Industry Bankrolls Amendment 3 & Proposition A to Deceive Missouri Voters & Keep Cigarettes Cheap

Missouri Public Health Organizations Urge Voters to Reject Both Tobacco Ballot Measures in November

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo., October 3, 2016 – Two tobacco measures will appear on the Missouri ballot in November: Amendment 3 and Proposition A. Both ballot initiatives are supported by the tobacco industry in an effort to deceive Missouri voters and prevent an adequate increase of Missouri's lowest-in-the-nation tobacco tax. As a result, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, the American Heart Association, American Lung Association in Missouri, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City and Tobacco-Free Missouri issue the following statement:

"It is unfortunate two tobacco industry-sponsored ballot measures will appear on Missouri's ballot in November. Voters should be alarmed that those who profit from keeping smokers addicted have hijacked worthwhile causes by forcing Missourians to settle for a paltry increase in the tobacco tax that will not deter smoking.

"Small and incremental increases to the tobacco tax will not keep kids from becoming addicted to cigarettes or help adults quit. Tobacco taxes work when the price increase is substantial enough to motivate current smokers to quit and prevent kids from starting. A dime here or there is not sufficient. Tobacco companies are experts at finding ways to absorb small tax increases through adjusted pricing.

"All previous efforts to raise Missouri's tobacco tax by meaningful amounts have been thwarted by those who profit from smoking addiction – both convenience stores and cigarette manufacturers. R.J. Reynolds' current campaign contributions totaling more than \$5 million in support of a tobacco tax proposal are unprecedented. Reynolds, best known for their infamous Joe Camel cartoon, is notorious for its aggressive efforts to lure kids into smoking. Missouri voters shouldn't let the tobacco industry write policies that ultimately keep our state's youth hooked on these deadly products.

"Tobacco products in Missouri are too cheap, and the health costs are too high. Our state is long overdue for a tobacco tax increase, but it needs to be one that will make a difference and save lives.

"When it comes to Amendment 3 and Proposition A, we encourage Missouri voters to question motives and follow the money, which leads directly to the tobacco industry."

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