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Letters to the Editor
[Newspaper]
[Address]

To the Editor:

When an anti-smoking organization criticizes a particular brand of cigarettes because they do not like that brand's advertising or promotion, we are getting farther away from public advocacy and closer to an intimidating attempt at censorship.

This is what Doctors Ought to Care (DOC) and Group to Alleviate Smoking Pollution (GASP) have done with their recent anti-Virginia Slims advertising campaign. They are suggesting that the tobacco industry should not be allowed to sponsor professional sports like women's tennis.

When we began sponsoring the Virginia Slims Series in 1971, women's tennis was practically non-existent as a serious sporting event. The purse for the first tournament in Houston was \$7,500.

Today Philip Morris is still the sole corporate sponsor for women's tennis. But instead of sponsoring a single tournament with a top prize of \$7,500, the Virginia Slims Series today is an internationally recognized sporting event, awarding prizes that total more than \$15 million. It is one of the biggest success stories in sports promotion and we are very proud of the part we have been allowed to play in it.

In Canada, where a proposed ban on all tobacco advertising promotion is a serious threat, tennis professionals, as an organized group, have been among the most visible and vocal opponents. They warn that passage of the ban in Canada will lead to the end of tennis as a professional sport in that country.

Like the sponsors of tobacco advertising and promotion bans, in this country and elsewhere, anti-smoking groups like DOC and GASP believe the

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Professional tennis will not be the only
thing lost if those who would ban the advertising
of tobacco have their way.

Sincerely yours,

Mary A. Taylor

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