

The Tobacco Institute

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FOR RELEASE:

10:30 a.m., December 11, 1986

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**GOVERNMENT HEALTH OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN EFFORTS
TO CENSOR DISSENTING SCIENTIFIC VIEWPOINTS**

**Tobacco Institute Demands Cabinet-Level Investigation;
Accuses Officials of Abusing Science for Political Ends.**

WASHINGTON, December 11, 1986 -- The Tobacco Institute announced today that it has asked the Department of Health and Human Services for a formal investigation into evidence that officials of that federal agency and others have attempted to censor the views of independent scientists and abuse science on the question of cigarette smoke in the air and the health of nonsmokers.

In asking for the investigation, The Institute explained: "We deeply regret to report that our efforts to support an objective investigation into this issue have been hampered by attempts to censor the views of independent scientists... These activists include employees of the Department of Health and Human Services."

The Tobacco Institute is the trade association representing U.S. cigarette manufacturers.

The Institute cited the activities of officials in the office of the Surgeon General, as well as the holder of that office, C. Everett Koop. The particular incidents of censorship and abuse of science include:

- o Efforts by employees of the Surgeon General's office to censor dissenting scientific viewpoints, by pressuring several scientists not to participate in a June conference on environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) at Georgetown University. These pressures resulted in the cancellation of the conference, which was intended as a forum for the open and free exchange of scientific viewpoints on the question of cigarette smoke and the health of nonsmokers.
- o Inaccurate public statements by the Surgeon General on the findings of scientific studies of ETS. In 1985, the Surgeon General told a Senate subcommittee that of 15 studies examining a possible link between "passive smoking" and lung cancer, all

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but three showed a "statistically significant positive correlation." In fact, no more than four of the studies showed consistent statistical significance. More recently, the Surgeon General changed his testimony, saying only that "several" of the studies showed significant correlations. No effort has been made to clear up misconceptions based on the earlier remarks.

- o Dramatic differences in the public and private statements of the Surgeon General on ETS. While publicly stating that cigarette smoke in the air jeopardizes the health of nonsmokers, Dr. Koop has offered a different opinion in private. In a recent letter to a California health official, the Surgeon General made clear his support for a smoke-free environment, but acknowledged that dissenting scientists are correct in stating "that the 'currently available data do not support a conclusion that exposure to ETS represents a health hazard' ..., given the existing evidence."
- o A tenured professor at a major state university was threatened with the loss of research funds by the state's health commissioner as a result of his involvement with a group of scientists who advise the tobacco industry on indoor air quality issues.

At the news conference announcing the call for the investigation, The Institute also released a report, "Tobacco Smoke and the Nonsmoker: Scientific Integrity at The Crossroads." The 53-page document details efforts by government officials and others to violate academic freedom by censoring dissent in the scientific community and abusing standards of scientific objectivity.

"Tobacco Smoke and the Nonsmoker" also provides a detailed review of what is known to date about the science of environmental tobacco smoke. The report states: "... the continued propagation of unfounded claims that tobacco smoke compromises -- even slightly -- the health of nonsmokers will only intensify the current climate of emotionalism and impede the progress of scientific integrity."

FOR COMMENTS AND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS, CONTACT:
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