

THE JUUL / ALTRIA PARTNERSHIP PUTS NATION'S PUBLIC HEALTH AT GREATER RISK
FDA Must Use Full Authority to Stop Youth E-cigarette Epidemic

STATEMENT OF ROBIN KOVAL, CEO AND PRESIDENT OF TRUTH INITIATIVE®

The JUUL / Altria partnership means one thing only: more sales of both deadly cigarettes and highly addictive e-cigarettes at the expense of our nation's public health. More than 3.6 million youth are in serious peril of having their lives hijacked by nicotine — largely because of JUUL — and those new young nicotine users are four times more likely to go on to smoke cigarettes. Furthermore, while switching completely would yield significant health benefits for smokers, current data show most smokers who use e-cigarettes continue to use cigarettes also. This dual use yields zero health benefit, and, in fact, may actually produce more harm.

We applaud FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb's criticism of JUUL and Altria for brokering a partnership that flies in the face of commitments made by both companies to help end the youth e-cigarette epidemic. The FDA needs to call their bluff on the recent contradictory claims of Altria and JUUL and immediately use its full authority to regulate e-cigarettes. Millions of parents and young people are counting on the FDA to take the reins as self-regulation by self-serving companies does not work and never has. JUUL, through its financial and strategic partnership with Altria, is now part of the tobacco industry and fully aligned with the motives and business objectives of adjudicated racketeers. Neither entity can be trusted or empowered as credible partners in solving the youth e-cigarette epidemic.

While JUUL continues to behave more and more like Big Tobacco, Altria continues to operate as they always have: like a company whose fortunes depend on addicting each successive generation to nicotine, knowing that 98 percent of all smokers begin before the age of 26. It is no surprise that the makers of Marlboro, America's No. 1 cigarette brand that for decades has recruited youth "replacement smokers" for the 1,300 people that die each day from Big Tobacco's products, would purchase a \$13 billion stake in JUUL — a product that has driven unprecedented popularity among youth and that dominates the e-cigarette market. The partnership gives the tobacco industry direct access to a new pipeline of millions of youth e-cigarette users, most of whom were not smokers in the first place, and instantly gives JUUL access to shelf space in more than 230,000 retail outlets — more than doubling what it was before.

Preventing a new generation from a lifelong addiction to nicotine and a trajectory to deadly cigarettes, as well as realizing any potential benefit from e-cigarettes for smokers who 100 percent quit the use of deadly combustible tobacco, can only happen in an environment in which the FDA acts quickly to implement its full regulatory authority. The tobacco industry has time and time again (and now once more) shown its complete disregard and disrespect for honest, self-regulatory practices. We urge the FDA to quickly do its job and we stand ready to support them in doing so.