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San Francisco Voters Not Fooled by Big Tobacco's Wallet; Upholds Law to Stop Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products

Truth Initiative® calls on FDA to follow city's lead to restrict the sale of flavored tobacco products and protect public health

Statement of Robin Koval, CEO and President of Truth Initiative®

In a huge victory for public health, San Francisco voters took a stand against Big Tobacco, approving Proposition E, which prohibits local tobacco retailers from selling flavored tobacco products, including menthol, despite the industry's best efforts to dissuade them. Restricting the sale of flavored tobacco products has the potential to save thousands of lives, especially since flavors play a significant role in drawing youth and young adults to tobacco products.

Last July, San Francisco historically became the first United States city to bar the sale of flavored tobacco products, including menthol. However, they were met with nearly a year of concerted efforts from Big Tobacco, working to repeal the ordinance by pouring nearly \$12 million dollars into an opposition campaign backed by tobacco giant, R.J. Reynolds. This, along with efforts from Philip Morris International — the tobacco giant behind popular brand name cigarettes like Marlboro — highlight the duplicity of the tobacco industry as it calls for a "smoke-free world," yet continues to oppose life-saving measures at every turn.

Truth Initiative® has repeatedly called on the Food and Drug Administration to outlaw flavored products, including menthol. While overall smoking rates have declined across the country, menthol cigarettes are slowing that progress. Youth and young adults use flavored tobacco products more than other age groups, and flavored products are often the first tobacco products youth and young adults ever use.

We're thrilled by San Francisco's decision to pass Proposition E. This decision goes to show that no matter how much money the industry spends, the public won't be fooled by Big Tobacco. We hope the outcome in San Francisco gives the FDA the courage to do their job with menthol and flavor regulation on a national scale and give all Americans the protections from the harms of tobacco that the people of San Francisco now have.

Smoking remains the number one preventable cause of death and disease in the U.S., killing more than 540,000 people each year. The removal of menthol from cigarettes is likely to reduce youth smoking initiation, improve smoking cessation outcomes in adult smokers and, ultimately, save lives.

About Truth Initiative

Truth Initiative is a national public health organization that is inspiring tobacco-free lives and building a culture where all youth and young adults reject tobacco. The truth about tobacco and the tobacco industry are at the heart of our proven-effective and nationally recognized truth® public-education campaign, our rigorous and scientific research and policy studies, and our innovative community and

youth engagement programs supporting populations at high risk of using tobacco. The Washington, D.C.,-based organization, formerly known as Legacy, was established and funded through the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement between attorneys general from 46 states, five U.S. territories and the tobacco industry. To learn more about how Truth Initiative speaks, seeks and spreads the truth about tobacco, visit truthinitiative.org.