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truth® Teams Up with Imagine Dragons Lead Vocalist Dan Reynolds and Country Star Jon Pardi to Expose Big Tobacco for its Manipulation of Lower-Income Communities
Debuting During 60th Annual GRAMMY Awards, truth Encourages Young People to Tell Big Tobacco Why They're 'Worth More' in its New Campaign

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Jan. 25, 2018) – Nearly 38 million Americans still smoke tobacco¹, and as inequality in America continues to expand by many measures, the smoking epidemic is a growing aspect of that divide. 72 percent of remaining smokers are from lower-income communities and this is no accident. Big Tobacco not only targets these communities to start smoking, but makes it harder for them to stop with products designed to be more addictive. The exploitative practices of the tobacco industry are the reason why smoking rates are nearly twice as high among people living below the poverty line.

truth, one of the largest and most effective youth tobacco prevention campaigns, teamed up with GRAMMY-nominated Imagine Dragons lead vocalist Dan Reynolds and country star Jon Pardi, in a new campaign set to debut during the 60th annual GRAMMY Awards. These award-winning singers, along with young people from communities exploited by the tobacco industry, will lend their voices to call out Big Tobacco for preying on the nation's most vulnerable populations.

The campaign, titled "Worth More," exposes the tobacco industry's exploitation of residents in these areas. Lower-income communities are more likely to:

- Have more tobacco retailers
- Have larger, more prominent advertisements for tobacco
- Have a lower mean retail price
- Have tobacco retailers within 1,000 feet of a school

In addition to engineering tobacco plants with two times the natural levels of nicotine² to fuel addiction, tobacco companies spend more than \$8 billion per year marketing their products. More than 80 percent of that budget (which equates to nearly \$7 billion per year) is spent on discounting practices or lowering the costs of cigarettes³, so consumers can spend less and smoke more.

"The industry is adept at putting bulls-eyes on the backs of people they believe can be manipulated," said Robin Koval, CEO and president of Truth Initiative®, the national public health organization that directs and funds the truth campaign. "Making cigarettes cheaper and more addictive are just two of the many ways that the tobacco industry exploits hard working communities. Where you live, how much you have, or what you do shouldn't determine how much you're worth."

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Smoking is down but almost 38 million Americans still smoke.*
<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2018/p0118-smoking-rates-declining.html>

² Lewan T. *Dark secrets of tobacco company exposed*, 1998

³ *Federal Trade Commission Cigarette Report for 2015*

https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/documents/reports/federal-trade-commission-cigarette-report-2015-federal-trade-commission-smokeless-tobacco-report/2015_cigarette_report.pdf

Unfortunately, this particularly impacts young people, with more than 3,200 Americans under 18 smoking their first cigarette every day⁴. Although teen smoking of traditional cigarettes in the United States reached a historic low of 5.4 percent in 2017⁵, tobacco use is still the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States, killing more than 540,000 Americans each year.

This campaign comes on the heels of court-ordered ads that Big Tobacco is currently airing, which admit to the deadly effects of smoking, including the manipulation of nicotine levels in cigarettes. According to new Truth Initiative research, 81 percent of respondents had not seen them on TV or in the newspaper⁶. By unveiling this campaign at the GRAMMY Awards, **truth** is able to accomplish what the corrective statements could not by successfully reaching millions of American youth.

Those who want to take action are encouraged to tell Big Tobacco why they're #worthmore by tweeting to @truthorange and using the custom profile photo overlay that can be downloaded at thetruth.com to share across social media profiles.

"Worth More" follows the 2017 MTV Video Music Awards, where **truth** called out Big Tobacco for exploiting individuals with mental health conditions and members of the military. The campaign encourages and empowers young people to use their creativity as a powerful force for change.

The *FinishIT* campaign and new "Worth More" creative were developed by 72andSunny. Media planning and buying is handled by Assembly.

About truth

truth is one of the most successful and one of the largest national youth tobacco prevention campaigns. The campaign exposes the tactics of the tobacco industry, the truth about addiction and the health effects and social consequences of smoking. **truth** gives teens facts to make their own informed choices about tobacco use and inspires them to use their social and creativity in the fight against tobacco. The campaign is credited with preventing hundreds of thousands of teens from starting to smoke and is working to make this the generation that ends smoking for good. To learn more, visit thetruth.com.

truth is part of Truth Initiative, a national public health organization dedicated to achieving a culture where all youth and young adults reject tobacco. To learn more about Truth Initiative's work speaking, seeking and spreading the truth about tobacco, visit truthinitiative.org.

⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General](#). Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014 [accessed 2017 Jun 15].

⁵ <http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/data/17data/17drtbl17.pdf>

⁶ Truth Initiative. Qualtrics Survey of 1,050 participants 15-34. Data collected January 3-5, 2018.