

BIG TOBACCO HURTS CALIFORNIA WORKERS

Despite the gains California has made over the years in reducing tobacco use, the tobacco industry continues to aggressively market its dangerous products to Californians, particularly to the same communities that labor unions fight for: Black, Latino, Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, LGBTQ+, Tribal and people with low-economic status.

All Californians have the right to a workplace that's free of dangerous hazards, including secondhand smoke. Today, labor unions are among the most powerful organizations fighting for workplace protections, including smoke-free

KEY POINTS:

- Secondhand smoke from cigarettes still causes the death of more than **4,000 Californians each year**, primarily due to exemptions to smoke-free workplace laws.¹
- Smoking costs California taxpayers about **\$3.5 billion a year in healthcare costs** for tobacco-related diseases. Unions and their members pay the price in higher health care premiums or costs in union health plans.
- **Low-income Californians and people of color are hit the hardest**, two communities that make up the majority of union members.²
- An estimated **one in eight smokers** in the United States belongs to a labor union.^{3,4}



laws, which keep workers safe and healthy both on the job and at home.

In fact, organized labor was at the forefront of the nation's first comprehensive smoke-free workplace law in the early 1990s that continues to play a critical role in protecting Californians' health today. Still, some workplaces, particularly those in outdoor settings, are not smoke-free.

Union members and leaders can continue to play an important role in advancing the smoke-free cause and improving the health outcomes of all Californians. It's time to stand in solidarity with one another and keep up the fight against the tobacco industry to save lives.

¹ California Environmental Protection Agency: Air Resources Board. (2005). Proposed Identification of Environmental Tobacco Smoke as a Toxic Air Contaminant. UCSF: Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education. Retrieved from escholarship.org/uc/item/8hk6960q

² Max W, Sung H-Y, Shi Y, & Stark B. (2014). *The Cost of Smoking in California, 2009*. San Francisco, CA: Institute for Health & Aging, University of California, San Francisco. Retrieved from: www.trdrp.org/files/cost-smoking-ca-final-report.pdf

³ Barbeau, E. M., Goldman, R., Roelofs, C., Gagne, J., Harden, E., Conlan, K., Stoddard, A., & Sorensen, G. (2005). A new channel for health promotion: building trade unions. *American journal of health promotion : AJHP*, 19(4), 297–303. doi.org/10.4278/0890-1171-19.4.297

⁴ Barbeau, E. M., Delaurier, G., Kelder, G., McLellan, D., Sorensen, G., Balbach, E. D., & Levenstein, C. (2007). A decade of work on organized labor and tobacco control: reflections on research and coalition building in the United States. *Journal of public health policy*, 28(1), 118–135. doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jphp.3200118

