

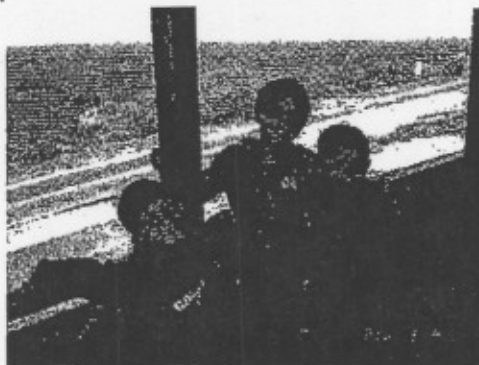
20 October 2006

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Originator: Dehran Swart

Tobacco Products Control Amendment Bill**Oral Presentation to the Health Portfolio Committee
Parliament of South Africa****Dehran Swart**

Honourable members, thank you for affording me the opportunity to make this oral submission with respect to the latest amendment to the Tobacco Products Control Act of 1993. I am a father of three beautiful children and they are the reason for motivating me into making this submission.



It does not make sense for those of us who love this country, who have decided to remain in South Africa in order to contribute to its development, who have strived to see the demise of apartheid, through adverse conditions of victimisation and incarceration, not to support this amendment. Support for this amendment means continuing the noble fight to ensure the very best conditions exist in South Africa so that all citizens can realise their potential. Just as people are passionate to find ways of protecting our nation against the ravages of poverty, malnutrition, malaria and HIV & AIDS, we should also protect our nation, especially our young children from being tricked into a lifetime of nicotine addiction. Tobacco is presently responsible for over 5 million deaths world wide and is estimated to kill about 65 000 South Africans annually. The latest statistics in SA 36% of men smoke at least one cigarette per day; 10% of women smoke at least one cigarette per day (AMPS 2006 RA). Let us not allow the tobacco industry to play Russian roulette with the lives of our young ones.



This bill is not infringing on personal liberties. This bill is not proposing fines to be given to those parents who consistently smoke in their vehicles thus creating a "gas chamber" for their children.

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The Bill sets out to:

1. Strengthen the existing Act by increasing fines for smoking in public place, and removing ambiguities that made enforcement difficult (e.g. there was no clear fine for smoking in public places);

It makes no sense to have legislation in place but the enforcement of the regulations is not possible.

2. Remove misleading labels like "light" and "mild" from cigarette packaging, because they create a false impression of safety;

Unscrupulous advertising and marketing by the tobacco industry has to stop. These terms have been used by them to imply that certain brands are "safer". Many scientific studies have shown that consumers have assumed that that this is the case when purchasing cigarettes with these descriptors on the packaging. Many scientific studies have also shown that the consumption of these products is just as lethal.

3. Control the ingredients and emissions from cigarettes and to establish manufacturing standards;

Surely it is not unusual for products to list the ingredients they contain? There are regulations and guidelines that pertain to the labelling of food. Why should the ingredients of tobacco products not be disclosed? Cigarettes, after all, are unique nicotine delivery devices that contain numerous chemicals, many of which are known carcinogens. It is possible for manufactures to abide to standards related to the production of tobacco products.

4. Set safety standards so that cigarettes are less likely to start fires;

Far too often to members of the general public, like myself, see smokers tossing their cigarette butts out of their car windows. Just ask "Working on Fire" about the resources needed to deal with fires. There have been many reported cases of fires being started by this neglectful behaviour with one unfortunate incident that led to the death of a tourist. Technological advances exist that make lit cigarettes self-extinguishing items when not being consumed after a period of time. These standards will eventually resulting making cigarettes less likely to start fires.

There is nothing unusual or out of the ordinary with this Bill. It is in line with international legislative changes as it will result in the convergence of South African laws into line with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

Let us continue to improve upon public health legislative mechanisms to improve the health of our nation.

Thank you once again.