

Tobacco Initiative Reaches Halfway Point for Signatures

The Committee for a Healthy Future is one step closer
to saving the lives of Missourians

Jefferson City, Mo. (March 29, 2006) — The Committee for a Healthy Future has collected half of the signatures needed to put a proposal that will save lives and improve health care on the November ballot. 150,000 signatures are needed by May 9.

"We are on track to put this life-saving initiative on the ballot, and everywhere we go, Missourians tell us this is the right solution to Missouri's smoking problem," said Cindy Erickson, Chief Executive Officer of the American Lung Association of Missouri and the Committee's spokesperson.

The Committee for a Healthy Future is proposing a Constitutional Amendment with strict audits and controls to prevent any misuse of funds aimed at cutting smoking and improving health care.

Missouri State Auditor Claire McCaskill recently announced that tobacco settlement monies have been squandered and not used as promised for anti-smoking prevention and cessation programs.

"Our proposal mandates annual audits that will ensure the money is being spent as voters approved, and there are strict limits which will prevent the Legislature from diverting the new taxes to pay for any other government programs," said Erickson.

Groups across Missouri are joining the effort. Recent endorsers include AARP Missouri, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City, Kansas City Chamber of Commerce and St. Louis Regional Chamber & Growth Association.

For a full list of endorsing organizations or more information on The Committee for a Healthy Future, please visit www.healthymissouri.org.

###