

For decades, tobacco companies paid Hollywood millions to push smoking in movies. Why are your state's taxpayers doing it now?



LAST YEAR, THE U.S. SURGEON GENERAL

reported that tobacco companies have a history of paying Hollywood to put smoking on screen.

Today, so do taxpayers.

Through film production incentives, states hand out hundreds of millions of dollars to producers of movies with smoking.

Research shows that exposure to on-screen smoking accounts for 800,000 current teen smokers. A quarter-million of these kids will ultimately die from tobacco-induced diseases like cancer.

The problem is so urgent that, in May 2012, the attorneys general of 38 states wrote to Hollywood's top executives to demand that they stop what the AGs called a "colossal, preventable tragedy."

The challenge for states?

Indiscriminate film subsidies undermine efforts to keep tens of thousands of kids from starting to smoke — and burden states with billions in health costs. No state can afford such a glaring policy conflict.

Fortunately, the fix is straightforward.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that states simply make future media productions with tobacco ineligible for public subsidies.

There's no First Amendment issue here. After all, states already refuse to subsidize all sorts of other media production, from political ads to porn.

Awareness is growing. Washington State's Attorney General has petitioned to block state tax credits for movies with tobacco produced there. Mainstream health groups have united to change California's subsidy rules, too.

Whether or not you believe film subsidies make sense as economic development policy, collateral damage to kids' health makes them unsustainable.

And unsupportable.

It's time to mend your state's subsidies.

Or end them.



**SMOKE
FREE
MOVIES**

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SMOKING IN MOVIES KILLS IN REAL LIFE. Smoke Free Movie policies—the R-rating, certification of no payoffs, anti-tobacco spots, and an end to brand display—are endorsed by the World Health Organization, American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Heart Association, Legacy, American Lung Association, Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights, American Public Health Association, Breathe California, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Los Angeles County Dept. of Health Services, New York State Dept. of Health, New York State PTA, and many others. Visit SFM online or contact: Smoke Free Movies, UCSF School of Medicine, San Francisco, CA 94143-1390.