

NATIONAL SMOKERS ALLIANCE
Fact Sheet

Overview

- o The NSA is a non-profit national organization made up of a broad-section of American adults who support smokers' rights. It is based in Alexandria, Va.
- o The goals of the alliance are to fight smoking bans and discriminatory taxation and to help bring about accommodation as the reasonable solution to situations confronting smokers and non-smokers.

Membership

- o Members must certify that they are 21 years of age or older.
- o The NSA is requesting a membership fee of \$5 to \$10 to help pay for services, including an 800-number hotline and monthly newsletter.

Political Activity

- o The NSA will be involved in grass roots activities and will encourage members to contact their representatives in Congress regarding legislation that affects their rights.

Funding

- o The NSA received a development grant from Philip Morris, and hopes to receive additional grants from all segments of the industry. The NSA also is asking for a membership fee from individuals wishing to join.

Relationship to tobacco companies

- o In the past few years, smokers around the country, concerned about discriminatory legislation, began writing to the tobacco companies asking for information on an organization that would help them defend their rights.
- o Philip Morris responded by asking its public relations agency, Burson-Marsteller, to investigate the viability of such an organization.
- o After talking to a number of smokers, Burson-Marsteller reported that an organization of smokers, separate and distinct from the industry, was something that was past due if the rights of 50 million smokers are to be effectively represented.
- o Regardless of where the NSA gets its support, the alliance is an independent organization and will operate by and for the 50 million smokers in the United States.

2023203159

NSA/General Organization Questions

What is the National Smokers Alliance (NSA)?

The Alexandria, Va.-based National Smokers Alliance is a non-profit national organization made up of a broad-section of American citizens that support smokers' rights. NSA members are politically active adults who support freedom of choice and are not willing to let smokers be treated as second-class citizens.

How was the NSA started?

As a result of increasing restrictions on smoking, as well as more and more discussion of discriminatory taxation, the tobacco companies were beginning to get a considerable amount of mail from consumers seeking an organization to defend their rights. Philip Morris responded by asking its public relations agency, Burson-Marsteller, to explore the development of such an organization. After talking to a number of smokers, Burson-Marsteller reported that an organization of smokers, defending their own rights, separate and distinct from the industry, was something that was past due.

Philip Morris provided a development grant, and it is hoped that all segments of the industry -- from growers to retailers -- will provide financial support to the organization.

Regardless of support, the NSA will operate as exactly what the name implies -- an alliance of, by and for the 50 million smokers in the United States.

What are the goals of the alliance?

The NSA will be working to stop the growing number of smoking bans around the country, to fight discriminatory taxation and hiring practices and to help bring about accommodation as the reasonable solution to situations confronting smokers and non-smokers. The NSA will provide members with a national platform from which they can make their views known to legislators around the country.

Who comprises the membership? How many members does the NSA currently have? How many do you anticipate?

The NSA is made up of adult smokers from around the nation who are concerned about protecting their rights. We currently are in the process of organizing the alliance and recruiting members. As far as how many we anticipate, there are approximately 50 million smokers in the United States, and we would welcome the participation of all.

How are members recruited?

2023203160

Currently, through direct mail pieces targeted at adult smokers. We also hope that, as the organization grows, NSA members will become actively involved in recruiting new members.

Where did NSA get the list for the initial membership mailing, and who paid for the mailing and the "Truth About Smokers" poll?

The original mailing lists were provided to NSA by Philip Morris, which as the nation's largest tobacco company, has an interest in protecting smokers' rights. Philip Morris also provided the NSA with a grant that helped with the cost of the first mailing and the poll.

How is the organization being funded? Who is the major contributor? How big was the contribution?

The NSA has received a grant from Philip Morris and four tobacco industry-related organizations. The NSA hopes to receive grants from other U.S. tobacco companies. Individual members contribute a membership fee to help support NSA membership services, that will include a monthly newsletter and hotline.

How can the NSA justify asking smokers to pay a membership fee when it acknowledges that smokers already have to pay too much?

The National Smokers Alliance provides members with a variety of services, including a monthly newsletter and an 800 number where members can get up-to-date information on state and federal legislation affecting their rights. To help pay for these services, the NSA has asked members to contribute a small membership fee. Individuals who cannot afford to pay the fee are asked to contribute whatever amount they can.

Isn't the NSA just a front for the tobacco industry, and Philip Morris in particular?

The National Smokers Alliance is an independent non-profit organization based in Alexandria, Va. We have received a grant from Philip Morris and four industry-related organizations. The alliance hopes to receive additional grants from other U.S. tobacco companies, tobacco grower organizations, suppliers, etc. These contributions will help pay for the costs of running our organization and providing members with information and services.

How big is the NSA staff? Are they paid?

At the present time, we are in the process of hiring the staff for the alliance. Full-time employees will be paid.

Isn't it true that the NSA is being staffed by Burson-Marsteller, a Washington, D.C., public relations firm that has significant ties with Philip Morris?

2023203161

Three Burson-Marsteller employees are working on a part-time, temporary basis to help organize the alliance and hire permanent full-time staff. Philip Morris is one of Burson-Marsteller's clients.

Who is the driving force behind NSA? In other words, whose "brain child" is the alliance?

The "driving force" behind the National Smokers Alliance is the growing concern among adult smokers in this country over the move away from accommodation and toward discriminatory smoking laws. In Los Angeles, for example, smoking is banned in all restaurants. The state of Vermont has banned smoking in all public places. And numerous companies around the United States have refused to hire smokers and even have fired employees who smoke at home.

The National Smokers Alliance was born out of concern over these laws and restrictions and the desire to protect the rights of the individual.

How was the NSA advisory board selected? Are they being paid?

The advisory board is made up of prominent individuals who support accommodation of both smokers and non-smokers and can provide expertise to the alliance. Like most boards, they will be paid.

Will the NSA be involved in local/state/federal lobbying activities?

The NSA is an activist organization that provides its membership with information on legislation that affects their rights, as well as with information on how to contact their elected officials. The alliance also will serve as a platform from which smokers can make their voices heard by legislators.

Will the NSA be involved in political campaigns?

The National Smokers Alliance can and will provide its membership with information on where candidates stand on issues of concern to them.

In the future, the NSA may consider forming a political action committee, but in the meantime, the alliance will encourage its membership to actively participate in the political process.

What have anti-smoking groups said about the NSA? What has been the general public's reaction?

Anti-smoker groups obviously will not support NSA efforts.

The majority of Americans, however, cherish their freedoms and support accommodation over restrictive government bans. A

2023203162

recent Gallup Poll supports this fact, with approximately two-thirds of the respondents saying they support accommodation in public places over total smoking bans.

Therefore, we believe the general public will be supportive of the alliance's efforts.

Isn't the NSA just one more avenue for cigarette companies to recruit new smokers, especially impressionable young people?

No. The NSA is an independent organization. The alliance has no role in marketing and does not allow any one to join who does not certify that he or she is at least 21 years old.

Can a non-smoker join NSA?

Although we anticipate that the majority of the alliance's membership will be made up of adult smokers, any American who is concerned about government intrusion into the freedoms of the individual is welcome to join. The NSA only requires that a member certify that he or she is 21 years of age.

What are your membership requirements? How do you ensure that underage smokers don't join NSA?

Again, the only requirement is that an individual certify that he or she is at least 21 years old.

Since Philip Morris is a major "contributor" to the NSA, does the company have control over the NSA's agenda?

No. The NSA is an independent organization. Our first and only obligation is to our membership.

If the NSA receives funds from more than one tobacco company, won't the NSA be "caught in the middle" of conflicting interests?

No. The NSA is an independent organization. Our primary goal is to provide a platform from which adult smokers can fight discriminatory legislation and promote accommodation.

The driving force behind the NSA is smokers' rights -- an issue on which all tobacco companies agree. Regardless of any potential "conflict," however, the NSA will remain strictly an organization for its membership.

Does the NSA have an answer for people concerned about the health risks associated with secondhand smoke, especially in light of the EPA's report on environmental tobacco smoke? After all, it's fine to say you support an individual's choice to smoke, but what about the impact of that choice on non-smokers?

There has been a lot of debate over the EPA's report on

2023203163

environmental tobacco smoke, and the NSA takes issue with the agency's classification of ETS as a Group A carcinogen. The scientific data simply do not support the conclusion that ETS is a statistically significant risk to non-smokers.

The NSA, however, does acknowledge that tobacco smoke can be an annoyance to some individuals who do not smoke, and therefore, supports accommodation and good ventilation in the workplace and other public areas.

What is the NSA's position on:

-- a federal cigarette excise tax increase to pay for health care reform?

The NSA believes that excise taxes are discriminatory because they hit the poor and middle class harder than the wealthy.

With regard to legislation that would raise the federal cigarette tax to pay for health care reform, it is unfair to single out one group -- in this case, smokers -- to pay for a program that benefits everyone.

-- the recent poll for the Coalition for Smoking OR Health showing that the majority of Americans -- including smokers -- support an increase in the federal excise tax?

I am not familiar with the details of this poll. I do know, however, that the members of NSA strongly oppose a tax increase. Smokers already are one of the most heavily taxed groups in the country. In 1992 alone, smokers paid more than \$5 billion in federal cigarette taxes (more than \$11 billion when state and local cigarette excise taxes are added to the federal tax).

-- ETS?

Because tobacco smoke may be annoying to some, the NSA supports accommodation of smokers and non-smokers, as well as good ventilation in the workplace and public areas. Annoyance, however, does not justify the classification by the EPA of ETS as a Group A carcinogen. The scientific data simply do not support this conclusion.

-- smoking bans?

The NSA believes that people who smoke should be accommodated, just as people who don't smoke. Restaurants, office buildings and public buildings should offer both non-smoking and smoking sections. We also believe that smokers should recognize that their smoke can be annoying to non-smokers and, therefore, should extinguish their cigarettes in public areas where people are bothered by the smoke.

2023203164

-- advertising restrictions?

We oppose any effort to restrict free speech guarantees of the U.S. Constitution.

Study after study has shown that advertising of all kinds is not a factor in whether or not a person chooses to smoke. Even the former Surgeon General, C. Everett Koop stated in his 1989 report that, "There is no scientifically rigorous study available to the public that provides a definite answer to the basic question of whether advertising and promotion increase the level of tobacco consumption."

-- attempts to regulate the cigarette industry through the FDA?

Information on the potential health risks that have been associated with smoking are well-known by the American public. Adult smokers have weighed the information and made their decision. Freedom of choice, not more government regulation, is one of the goals for which the NSA is fighting.

-- hiring bans on smokers?

The NSA is against discriminatory hiring practices. Employers have no right to base employment decisions on personal choices like smoking.

-- the lawsuit brought by Philip Morris, RJR and tobacco grower groups against the EPA?

The NSA is not in a position to comment on the lawsuit. That is a matter for the courts.

-- tobacco exports to Third World nations?

The NSA is not involved with international issues.

-- the legal smoking age in various states?

The legal age for purchasing tobacco products is 18 or older in every state.

With regard to any measure to further raise the legal age, the NSA believes that the effort would be better spent on programs that would enforce existing laws and address the real reasons that minors start smoking -- peer pressure and the influence of adults.

2023203165

NSA/Individual Member Questions

How did you become involved with the NSA? Who recruited you?

I became involved with the National Smokers Alliance because of my concern over the growing number of smoking bans being enacted in shopping malls, airports, restaurants and work places across the country. This past summer, the city of Los Angeles banned smoking in all restaurants, despite the wishes of a majority of restaurant owners. Vermont has banned smoking in almost all public places throughout the state.

America was built on the principle of accommodation of differences. I believe that this is our nation's strength, and that we all should join together to fight discrimination in any form.

Are you being paid? Are you a full-time, permanent staff member, or do you work for another organization?

(fill in with specific info.)

Do you smoke? Why not?

No, I don't. But that is not the issue. The issue is that people have the freedom of choice on whether to smoke or not.

- or -

Do you smoke? When did you start smoking? What is your position on the number of young people who begin smoking each year?

Yes, I smoke. But the issue here is not me and my personal decisions, it is the importance of protecting the individual's freedom of choice.

With regard to young people, the NSA believes that smoking is an adult decision and supports programs and measures aimed at eliminating smoking by minors.

By saying that youth should not smoke, are you acknowledging that smoking is a health issue?

There are risks associated with almost every choice we make in life and, as adults, we are able to weigh all the information and make informed decisions. With regard to smoking, the public is well-informed about the health risks that some associate with smoking, and adults can listen to the information and make their choice. Children and teenagers, however, are not as well equipped to make mature decisions, and for this reason, the NSA supports programs to stop underage smoking.

2023203166

Do you have children? Do you smoke around them? If not, why not? If so, aren't you concerned about the health risks associated with secondhand smoke and children?

We all are concerned about the welfare of our children. There are many factors that play a role in the health of a child -- genetics, family history, socio-economic status and exposure in school or day care to other children or adults who are ill. Although some believe that environmental tobacco smoke may be a factor associated with respiratory illness in children, it is my understanding that the studies are inconclusive. In order to deal with this issue effectively, further research is needed.

Do you believe smoking causes cancer?

I am not a scientist, so I cannot address all the studies and statistics surrounding this issue. There are, however, risks associated with almost every choice we make as adults, and I believe in the right of the individual to make choices.

How do you feel about being associated with an organization that promotes the use of a product that kills hundreds of thousands of people every year?

The American public is very well-informed about the health risks that have been associated with smoking. Smokers have weighed the information and made an informed choice. The National Smokers Alliance is an organization of these individuals -- individuals who value not only their right to choose to smoke, but also their freedom from discriminatory laws and government intervention. I personally am proud to be associated with the alliance.

Don't you think smokers should pay more in taxes to support health care, since studies have shown that smokers are not as healthy and drain more from insurance companies?

No. The 50 million smokers in the United States already pay more than their fair share in taxes. In 1992 alone, smokers paid more than \$5 billion in federal cigarette excise taxes.

What about adults who would like to stop smoking but cannot because they are addicted?

That is a very complex issue from both a medical and psychological standpoint, and I am not qualified to make a statement on this subject. I do know, however, that since 1964, some 41 million Americans have quit smoking without the aid of any outside program designed to help them quit.

Do you believe that smokers should have the right to light up anywhere they choose?

The NSA believes in accommodation. We believe that people who

2023203167

smoke should be accommodated, just as people who don't smoke. Restaurants, office buildings and public buildings should offer both non-smoking and smoking sections. We also suggest that smokers recognize that their smoke can be annoying to non-smokers and extinguish their cigarettes in public areas where people are bothered by the smoke.

What about the rights of non-smokers? Aren't bans/restrictions necessary?

The NSA believes that accommodation, not bans, is the answer to solving the differences between smokers and non-smokers. According to a recent Gallup Poll, two-thirds of Americans agree.

Ideally, differences should be worked out on a voluntary basis -- businesses should make decisions according to customer/employee demands and individuals should be considerate of one other. If, however, government intervention is deemed necessary, then the NSA believes both smoking and non-smoking sections should be provided in restaurants, office buildings and public buildings.

Don't you think that the government has an obligation to protect smokers from the dangers of second-hand smoke?

The NSA has taken issue with the EPA's classification of environmental tobacco smoke as a "known human carcinogen." The alliance believes that the scientific data does not support this conclusion and that the agency's report was influenced by public pressure against smoking instead of science. Just the fact that the EPA excluded major studies that did not support its conclusions should make everyone suspicious.

I am not a scientist, so I can't address in detail the statistics associated with second-hand smoke. The EPA, however, has a record of making decisions that are based on public opinion rather than scientific data. (The agency destroyed the town of Times Beach, Mo., with exaggerated claims regarding dioxin and almost put the nation's apple growers out of business with scare tactics regarding Alar.)

I believe that accommodation is the right and fair solution to conflicts between smokers and non-smokers. Common courtesy and voluntary smoking policies are preferable to government-imposed restrictions and bans.

2023203168