

# Why 70% of Americans are ready to *R-rate* tobacco.

*Concern among parents grew by 10 percent last year alone.*

**T**HE MPAA has said that it needs to hear from America's parents before it adopts new industry-wide policies on tobacco. Now it can:

#### PARENTS WANT ACTION

The latest nationwide poll by the Social Science Research Center\* finds that:

- Four out five U.S. adults agree that movies influence adolescents to smoke;
- 70 percent want films with tobacco R-rated except if they show the health dangers of smoking;
- Two-thirds say theaters should be required to show anti-smoking ads before any film with smoking;
- 60 percent want tobacco logos kept out of all movie scenes.

#### SUPPORT IS GROWING FOR THE R-RATING AND OTHER VOLUNTARY, NON-INTRUSIVE SOLUTIONS

Public concern about films' influence on teen smoking and support for measures endorsed by health authorities has built over the past twelve months.

- Concern about movies' smoking influence increased among all adults by 7 percent, among parents by 10 percent;
- The majority favoring the R-rating grew by 12 percent;
- Public backing for anti-smoking ads in theaters and no more brand display also climbed.

Now that the MPAA knows where parents are heading on this issue, it has two options:

**OPTION A |** If parts of the film industry have an economic stake in pushing tobacco, the MPAA could choose to resist reform using the tobacco industry's own tactics:

- Co-opt famous names and institutions to front for them;
- Attack and distort the independent science;
- Propose endless studies that delay and obfuscate;
- Encourage PR-driven "educational" campaigns that don't reduce teen exposure;
- Substitute do-nothing, placebo policies (like adding "tobacco use" to PG-13 ratings)

for genuine solutions (R-rating future tobacco scenes).

Colluding on such strategies helped earn Big Tobacco its federal conviction for fraud and civil racketeering. Will the MPAA be more prudent?

**OPTION B |** Why not simply adopt the effective, forward-looking solutions already on the table?

- R-rating tobacco doesn't need to mean more R-rated films, just smokefree G/PG/PG-13 films. Films that show tobacco's dire health consequences or depict the tobacco use of actual historical figures will be exempted from the updated R-rating.

- Anti-tobacco ads in all distribution channels will help mitigate the pro-tobacco effect of R-rated films, which will continue to account for some teen exposure.

- Keeping brands off screen is a no-brainer. Why even *look* like product placement?
- Certifying no payoffs in the final credits, under penalty of perjury, will discourage anyone in the film industry from taking tobacco money in the future.

It will also reassure a nation increasingly ready and willing to take strong action to protect its children.



2006 studio track records at [SmokeFreeMovies.ucsf.edu](http://SmokeFreeMovies.ucsf.edu)



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