15 states spend $214 million a year to push smoking at kids?

The US Surgeon General has concluded that smoking in movies causes kids to smoke. Yet states still subsidize big-budget film productions that serve the tobacco industry’s marketing interests.

From 2010 to 2016, fifteen states subsidized 90 percent of all the top-grossing films with smoking shot in the United States [see table].

In 2016, the CDC projected that exposure to such films will recruit six million kids to smoke in this generation, eventually killing two million of them.

A Deadly Policy Conflict
States already deny public subsidies to other media productions, from pornography to political advertising.

So making future film and TV productions with tobacco imagery ineligible for state tax credits and other public subsidy—as the CDC has recommended—can resolve a costly and deadly policy conflict.

While states and localities move to raise tobacco taxes and increase age-to-purchase, which reduce teen smoking, public subsidies for films with smoking push kids to light up.

Together, top film states spend 25 percent more per year on films proven to recruit kids to smoke than they invest in programs proven to keep kids safe.

Tobacco companies have a nine-decade history of paying Hollywood millions of dollars to put smoking on screen. Today’s taxpayers shouldn’t do it for them.

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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, 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, NY State PTA, Truth Initiative, and many others. Visit SFM online or contact: Smoke Free Movies, UCSF School of Medicine, San Francisco, CA 94143-1390.

*Through Sept. 1, 2016. Smoking-film subsidies are estimated on top-grossing films’ publicly-reported production budgets and the average estimated net film subsidy rates for state programs active as of January 2016 (FL, MI and others have ended theirs). CA estimates adjusted to reflect program eligibility changes. $ totals may not equal sums due to rounding.