



Washington

wants to know



Will A Tobacco Company Change More Than Its Name?

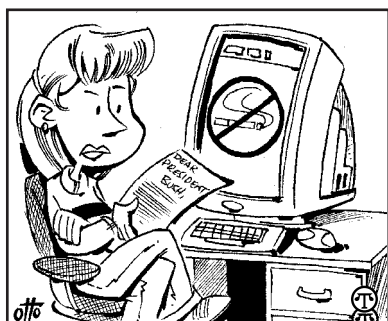
(NAPSA)—As the country's largest cigarette manufacturer mulls over a name change, Americans have a chance to voice their opinions on one of the hottest legal issues in Washington: The federal government's lawsuit against big tobacco. People can visit www.DontPardonBigTobacco.org where they can instantly fax a letter in support of the lawsuit to President Bush (more than 30,000 people have done so since June, 2001).

In September 1999, the federal government filed a lawsuit against the tobacco industry. The goal of the suit is to hold tobacco companies legally accountable for decades of illegal and harmful practices. Those practices are alleged to include marketing tobacco products to children and deceiving the public about the health risks of smoking and the addictiveness of nicotine.

The lawsuit gained momentum in 2000, when a federal judge denied the tobacco industry's motion to dismiss the suit and when the Clinton Administration budgeted 23.2 million dollars for the lawsuit for 2001.

Recently, the remedies the government is seeking from the tobacco industry were released. They show just how important this case is and include serious restrictions on tobacco marketing, advertising and packaging. The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids says that Big Tobacco's political allies in Congress might try to cut funding for the lawsuit in coming months.

Adding more fuel to the big tobacco fire is the planned name



A useful Web site lets visitors e-mail their opinions on anti-smoking issues to President Bush.

change by Philip Morris.

The tobacco company plans to change its name to The Altria Group. Anti-smoking organizations say it is an effort to change the company's tarnished image and escape responsibility for its actions.

The Campaign For Tobacco-Free Kids has produced an animated video on its Web site that parodies Philip Morris's image change. The film shows the Marlboro Man getting plastic surgery to change him into a seemingly harmless little girl who continues to lure kids to cigarettes.

"Despite a massive PR campaign to convince people otherwise, Philip Morris refuses to change its harmful business practices and does not deserve to be let off the hook for decades of deception and wrongdoing," says Matthew L. Myers, president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. To view the video or to send your own note about the lawsuit to President Bush, visit www.PhilipMorrisCantHide.org.