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Senate

American Legacy Foundation

Mr. CARPER. Today is March 4. Five years ago today something called the American Legacy Foundation was created. Over the past 5 years, Legacy Foundation has helped us to make great strides in the improvement of health for all kinds of Americans, not only today but in the years to come. They have helped us to begin building a world where young people reject tobacco and where just about anyone can quit smoking. But as we celebrate the work of the foundation today, a lot more work needs to be done.

The foundation was established in March of 1999 as a result of something called the Master Settlement Agreement between a coalition of attorneys general in 46 States and 5 U.S. territories and the tobacco industry. The foundation remains primarily today funded by payments designated by the settlement.

The foundation develops national programs that address the health effects of tobacco use. They do it through grants, technical training and assistance, and youth activism, strategic partnerships, countermarketing and grassroots marketing campaigns, public relations, and community outreach to populations disproportionately affected by the toll of tobacco.

The foundation has two goals that guide its work toward creating tobacco-free generations. One of those is to arm all young people with the knowledge and tools to reject tobacco. The other is to eliminate the disparities in access to tobacco prevention and cessation services.

The truth campaign is one effort to curb tobacco use among teens. Truth is the foundation's comprehensive countermarketing campaign to prevent and reduce youth smoking. The truth campaign was credited by the National Institute on Drug Abuse as one of the major programs which contributed to the steady reduction in teen cigarette smoking.

In addition to celebrating this achievement today, I also want to share with my colleagues the very real threats faced by the American Legacy Foundation. This year the foundation received its last payment from the Master Settlement Agreement. Because of this drastic reduction in resources, all of the successes that have been achieved to date are suddenly jeopardized. I don't believe we can afford to lose any of the ground we have gained on tobacco control.

I ask my colleagues to consider these facts: Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in this country. Tobacco kills some 440,000 people per year--more

than alcohol, AIDS, car accidents, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined. Twenty-four percent of high school students in my State still smoke. That is down from where it was a couple years ago, but still almost one out of four. Every day some 2,000 teenagers begin smoking. Their average age is actually about 13. Of those who become hooked on smoking, one of three will end up dying from their use of tobacco.

Each year in my State of Delaware, some 1,100 adults die from cigarette smoking. I am told over 900 kids in my State have lost at least one parent through smoking-caused death. I would also say smoking is having a financial impact. Annual health care expenditures in my State caused by tobacco use total \$221 million and over \$62 million in State Medicaid payments are related to tobacco use.

I had the privilege of being the founding cochairman of the American Legacy Foundation. Our founding chairman was Chris Gregoire, the Attorney General of Washington State. I was succeeded and joined on the foundation board by former Governor Mike Leavitt of Utah, now head of EPA, and by Parris Glendening, former Governor of Maryland. I am proud of the association I had with the foundation at its beginning and the great work we did, especially with young people who themselves helped to design, to craft, and to deliver the truth campaign. In no small part because of their efforts, especially the young people, the incidence of smoking has dropped significantly over the last half dozen years, and it is important that that work and that trend continue.

I thank the Chair for the time and I thank my colleague from Nevada and my

colleague from Minnesota for allowing me to speak.

I yield the floor.