

## **HANSEN BILL BANS FEDS FROM TOBACCO MONEY**

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WASHINGTON -- Rep. Jim Hansen, R-Utah, wants states to keep all the money from a huge settlement with tobacco companies -- if they will agree to spend at least a quarter of it on tobacco control.

He introduced a bill Wednesday with Rep. Martin Meehan, D-Mass., to waive any federal claims on the money as long as that one condition is met. However, President Clinton has said the federal government deserves up to 57 percent of the \$195 billion settlement as its share of federal-state Medicaid treatment of smoking-related diseases.

But the nation's governors -- led by Utah Gov. Mike Leavitt -- say the states took all the risks in lawsuits against tobacco companies, so they deserve all the money. They also said the federal government shouldn't tell them how to spend it.

Hansen and Meehan -- who are co-chairmen of the Congressional Task Force on Tobacco and Health -- said their bill is endorsed by the American Heart Association and the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids because it would ensure some money would be targeted to anti-tobacco efforts.

"This shouldn't be about roads or prisons," Meehan said. "I am very concerned that the states are viewing the settlement as a general revenue windfall, rather than an historic opportunity to reduce youth tobacco use."

Hansen agreed.

"It seems like common sense to me that, if tobacco use among teens is the problem, and tobacco companies give you money because of the problem, you might want to spend money to fix the problem," he said.

"Building prisons and highways are very important, but I don't understand how that solves the problem of teen smoking," Hansen said. "This legislation makes sure that the problem is addressed with money gained through the tobacco settlement."

Leavitt said Thursday he and Hansen agree in principle that a substantial portion of the tobacco settlement windfall should be spent on tobacco programs, but he parts company with Hansen on two critical issues.

"One, it is a classic federalism issue where we have the federal government prescribing what states should do rather than recognizing there are more smokers in New Orleans than in Salt Lake City," said Vicki Varela, Leavitt's spokeswoman. "Programs should be custom-fit to different populations."

The second issue, Varela said, is that Hansen's bill very narrowly specifies that money be spent to get people to stop smoking but not necessarily prevent them from taking up the habit. "It is equally, if not more important, to stop people from smoking in the first place."

Last month, the National Governors Association adopted a resolution drafted by Leavitt telling the federal government to keep its hands off the settlement money. "If the federal government wants to recover its own costs, it should bring its own legal action," Leavitt said last month.

He noted the settlement could bring \$836 million to Utah over 25 years. "That's a lot of money, but it is only 60 percent of the amount the state will spend in that time on tobacco-related illness," he said. "So it isn't even covering all of our costs."

States also argue they had to divert money from other programs to help pay for tobacco-

related illnesses, so using some money from the settlement for those other programs is appropriate.

Deseret News staff writer Jerry Spangler contributed to this story.