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REC'D MAR 28 1994

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March 21, 1994

Mr. Thomas F. Byrne
President
Thomas F. Byrne Organization, Inc.
P.O. Box 6565
Saddle Brook, New Jersey 07662

Dear Mr. Byrne:

Thank you for contacting me to voice your opposition to President Clinton's proposal to partially finance his health reform plan (H.R.3600, the Health Security Act) by increasing the excise tax on tobacco products. I appreciate knowing of your interest in this issue.

Like you, I was astounded by the percentage increase in tax on tobacco products included in the President's plan. The tax on cigarettes will increase 312.5% (from \$.24 per pack to \$.75 per pack), on small cigars will increase 3333%, on snuff will increase 3472%, on pipe tobacco will increase 1852% and on chewing tobacco will increase 10,417%! The concern of both producers and consumers of smokeless tobacco in particular is most certainly understandable.

The Committee on Ways and Means held hearings on these tax increases in early November, and hearings will continue in the months ahead. A great deal of testimony has already been provided by those opposed to these taxes, and there will undoubtedly be changes made to this legislation before it is brought to the floor of the House for a vote. As the debate continues, please be assured that your comments will be most helpful to me.

Sincerely,



Hamilton Fish, Jr.
Member of Congress

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