



COMMUNIQUE

News of immediate interest

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BC&T Urges Senate Finance Committee To Reject Proposed Excise Tax Increase

The Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers International Union has urged the Senate Finance Committee to reject the Clinton Administration's proposed tax increase of 75 cents per pack.

Union officials said a tripling of the cigarette tax to pay for health care reform would destroy nearly 40,000 jobs in the South alone. The statement coincided with the beginning of the Senate Finance Committee's hearings on health care reform legislation.

The BC&T International represents more than 15,000 people working in the U.S. cigarette manufacturing industry.

BC&T International President Frank Hurt described the proposed tobacco tax as "the wrong way to go" because it will result in massive layoffs in the domestic tobacco industry, targets one region of the country for an unfair share of the financing burden, and is one of the most regressive and unreliable sources of revenue available to the federal government.

"The Clinton Administration has championed the cause of creating high-wage, high-productivity jobs," said Hurt. "Yet, the Administration is promoting a policy which would destroy them. This is counterproductive at best and economically dangerous at worst."

Hurt said the proposed tax is so regressive that it would place a disproportionate share of financial burden on low- and middle-income families. He added that excise taxes have historically failed to generate the revenue that has been anticipated.

"The BC&T International calls on the Senate Finance Committee to discount the current anti-tobacco hysteria and focus on piecing together a health care reform plan that is comprehensive, controls costs and is financed fairly, equitably and reliably," he said. "Most importantly, the plan which ultimately emerges from Congress should not result in an enormous loss of high-wage jobs at a time when America desperately needs them."

Several members of BC&T Local 362-T in Macon have participated in anti-tax rallies in Macon and Washington, D.C., and contacted their elected officials to defeat the proposed tax increase.

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