

1 [Urging Congress to Amend the Comprehensive Smoking Education Act of 1984]

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3 **Resolution urging U.S. Congressional Representatives to amend the Comprehensive**
4 **Smoking Education Act of 1984 (Public Law 98-474) and require picture-based warning**
5 **labels.**

6 WHEREAS, In 2004, the Surgeon General reported a causal link between smoking
7 and 28 individual diseases, including the leading causes of death in the Western world and
8 harm to every major organ in the human body; and

9 WHEREAS, Public awareness about the severity of the health consequences of
10 consuming tobacco products is significantly lower among working class and immigrant
11 communities throughout the United States; and

12 WHEREAS, According to the 2000 United States Census nearly 1 in 5 people speak a
13 language other than English at home, and 1 in 20 U.S. adults are not literate in English; and,

14 WHEREAS, A survey of 150 smokers in the San Francisco area conducted by
15 POWER showed that, 97% of Spanish and Chinese speaking persons said they “did not
16 know” or “could not understand” the meaning of the cigarette warning label when given a
17 leaflet with all four Surgeon General Warnings; and

18 WHEREAS, Protection from language discrimination, particularly in regard to health
19 care and access to health information, is an important component of the 1964 Civil Rights
20 Act; and

21 WHEREAS, In 1998 the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Health and Human
22 Services issued a memorandum regarding the prohibition, under Title VI of the Civil Rights
23 Act of 1964 against discrimination on the basis of national origin, including persons with
24 limited English proficiency; and

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1 WHEREAS, Health Canada and the Canadian federal health department introduced
2 picture based warning labels in 1994; and

3 WHEREAS, In the first decade since picture based warning labels were introduced in
4 Canada eight more countries have adopted similar legislation, while another fourteen
5 countries are in various stages of consideration and implementation of similar requirements;
6 and

7 WHEREAS recent research comparing smokers in Canada, the United States, the
8 United Kingdom and Australia found that smokers in countries requiring large, graphic health
9 warning labels on cigarette packs are more likely to recognize disease risks from smoking
10 and to be motivated to quit smoking; and

11 WHEREAS, The recent report “Worth More Than A Thousand Words” released by
12 POWER, the Data Center, and the San Francisco Tobacco Free Coalition recommends
13 picture-based warning labels as a solution to language and literacy discrimination in tobacco
14 health warning labels; and

15 WHEREAS, Congressional Representative Henry Waxman of Los Angeles has a long
16 history of sponsoring legislation to strengthen the effectiveness of health warning labels on
17 tobacco projects; and

18 WHEREAS Representative Waxman is now chair of the Congressional Committee on
19 Oversight and Government Reform which has jurisdiction over federal policy on tobacco,
20 including regulation of health warning labels; now, therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, That San Francisco Board of Supervisors hereby urges U.S.
22 Congressional Representatives who are concerned about tobacco control, language rights
23 and civil rights to propose legislation to amend the Comprehensive Smoking Education Act of
24 1984 (Public Law 98-474) and require picture-based warning labels; and, be it

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1 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors hereby directs
2 the Clerk of the Board to send a copy of this resolution to the San Francisco Congressional
3 delegation and to Representative Henry Waxman, Chair of the Committee on Oversight and
4 Government Reform, urging them to help initiate such amendments.

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