

19 Buying influence

"The tobacco industry continues to wield enormous political influence by spending millions on campaign contributions and lobbyists' salaries. It is disappointing that once again Congress has failed to put the interests of the public's health before Big Tobacco's agenda."
Chellie Pingree,
Common Cause President, 2004

"Political will to promote public health and a strong tobacco control advocacy presence can enable governments to resist the enormous pressure exerted upon them by multinational tobacco companies."
J Knight and S Chapman,
University of Sydney, Australia 2004

The tobacco industry spends tens of millions of dollars to influence public policy. Tobacco companies make major cash contributions to elected officials and political parties, subsidize air travel, finance political conventions and inaugurations, and host fundraisers

for politicians. Tobacco companies also donate a small percentage of their profits to civic, educational and charitable organizations to enhance their public image.

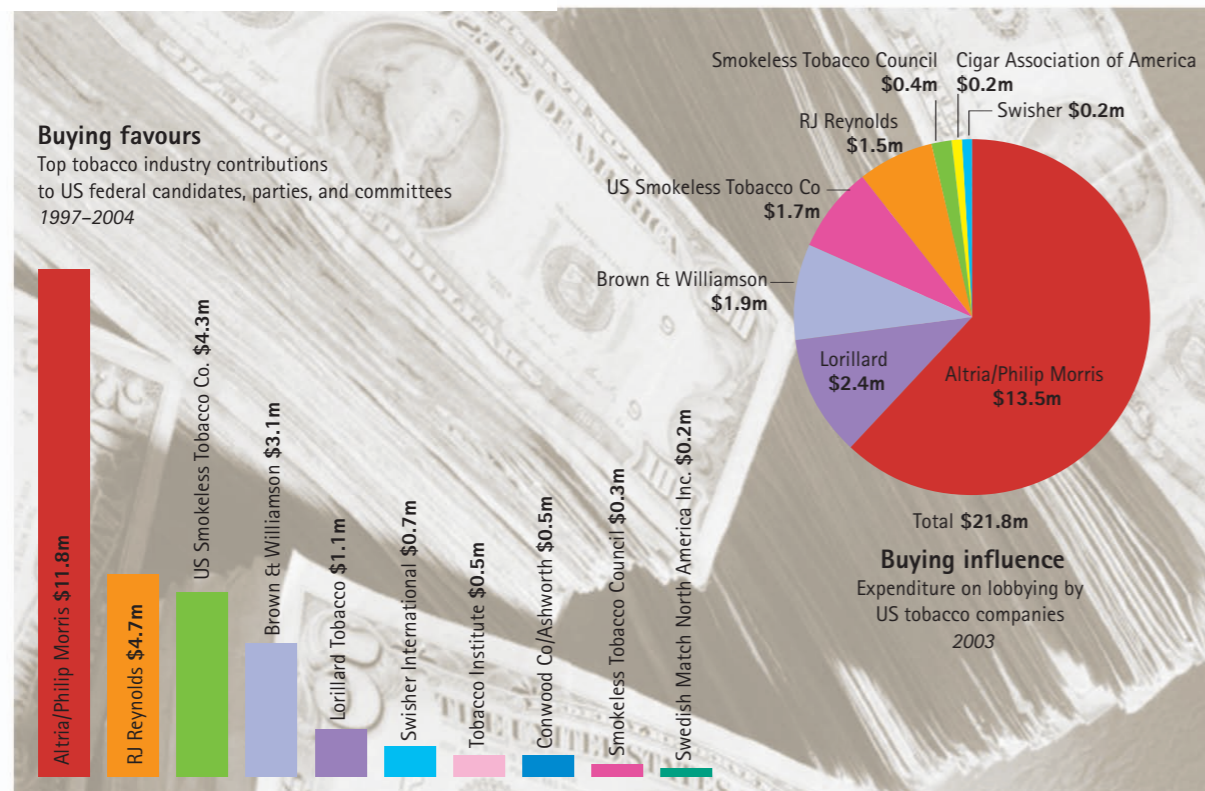
Tobacco companies conduct direct lobbying and sophisticated public relations campaigns using paid media to influence the opinions of political decision-makers.

For instance, the tobacco industry spent nearly \$10.4 million to lobby the United States Congress in the first six months of 2004. That amounts to about \$122,000 for every day Congress was in session.

A bill introducing comprehensive tobacco control legislation was defeated in the US Senate in 1998.

Senators who voted against the legislation had received, on average, nearly four times more money from the tobacco industry in the two years before their last election than those who voted in favour of the bill.

Tobacco industry tactics have been extended to countries throughout the world. Buying influence and favours through political contributions is common practice; however, most countries do not require mandatory reporting of tobacco industry inducements. The tobacco industry continues to promote its agenda using deceptive "front" organizations, such as "smoker's alliances" and industry-funded international consortiums.



"Small shopkeepers were enlisted to write protests to members of Parliament; the letters 'some with deliberate typographical errors to create the aura of authenticity,' were prepared by the (tobacco) industry for the shopkeepers."
Philip Morris, 1990

"We have got the unions to support industry in several countries. Prominent have been the efforts they have made on the tax issues in the UK where they were very involved in a letter writing campaign to Members of Parliament."
Philip Morris, 1985

"Aside from delaying the adoption of a convention the company is best served by participating in the development of the agreement. It would be in the company's interest to have the treaty focus entirely on protecting children and leaving adult choice protected..."
Jack Mongoven, 1997, of Mongoven, Biscoe, and Duchin (MBD), a specialist firm hired by Philip Morris to analyze the WHO FCTC process.

"Turning now to primary and passive smoking...To get more favorable press, we are contemplating organizing another journalists' conference similar to the one we put together in Madrid for Latin American journalists in 1984."
Philip Morris, 1985

"Philip Morris and the industry are positively impacting the government decisions of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE through the creative use of market specific studies, position papers, well briefed distributors who lobby, media owners and consultants..."
Philip Morris, 1987

"What are we trying to accomplish? Prevent further deterioration of overall social, legislative and regulatory climate, and ultimately, actually improve the climate for the marketing and use of tobacco products."
Philip Morris, 1990

"Unless countervailing steps are taken (such as lobbying), public decision-making will march with public opinion."
RJ Reynolds, 1978