



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **Citizens for Fairness in Florida Says It's Time to Close Florida's Tobacco Payment Loophole**

**MIAMI, Fla.** – Bringing the call for fairness in Florida to Miami, members of Citizens for Fairness in Florida held a press conference in support of legislation that closes a loophole in the state's tobacco payment system. Since 1997, some cigarette manufacturers in Florida have multiplied their market share many times over, courtesy of a tobacco payment loophole in the tobacco settlement.

"Florida's business community is vital for our economic success and businesses within the same industry must be held to the same standards," said Barney Bishop, CEO and President of Associated Industries of Florida. "There is no reason for some manufacturers, which sell more than 20% of all the cigarettes in the state, to have a government subsidy at a time when the state is facing a budget deficit close to \$4 billion."

Citizens for Fairness in Florida, a coalition of individuals, retailers, manufacturers, health care advocates, and statewide organizations, is working to ensure that manufacturers of all brands of cigarettes are contributing to the state – just as non-participating manufacturers currently make payments in 48 other states.

During the rally, members of the coalition expressed support for HB 1207, a bill that will generate at least \$50 million each year for the state by standardizing fees across the tobacco industry.

"We must close this loophole and return fairness to the tobacco industry. All tobacco manufacturers must be held to the same standards," continued Bishop. "Now is the time to end the special treatment for manufacturers of cheap cigarettes. HB 1207 is a long-needed fix that's fair for everyone."

Citizens for Fairness in Florida is working to bring fairness back to the tobacco market in Florida.

*[Citizens for Fairness in Florida](#) is an association of manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, statewide associations and organizations and individual Floridians committed to achieving economic success while operating within the system. We believe loopholes that give some*

*businesses advantages over others should be closed, so that businesses can compete fairly and effectively. For more information, visit [www.floridafairnessnow.com](http://www.floridafairnessnow.com).*

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