

ALTRIA/JUUL DEAL PUTS YOUTH E-CIGARETTE USERS AT GREATER RISK GIVEN BIG TOBACCO'S TRACK RECORD

DEAL COMES JUST DAYS AFTER U.S. SURGEON GENERAL DECLARES YOUTH E-CIGARETTE USE A PUBLIC HEALTH EPIDEMIC

STATEMENT OF ROBIN KOVAL, CEO AND PRESIDENT OF TRUTH INITIATIVE®

JUUL's claim that it is part of the solution for smokers looking to quit has lost even the slightest whiff of credibility as the company today announced a partnership with Altria, maker of the nation's No. 1 cigarette brand Marlboro, and adjudicated racketeer for lying to the American public for years about the addictive and deadly effects of cigarettes.

Sadly, this \$12.8 billion deal, which gives Altria a 35 percent stake in JUUL, comes just days after the release of data showing more than 20 percent of high schoolers now currently use e-cigarettes, and on the heels of the Department of Health and Human Services secretary and the Food and Drug Administration commissioner coming together for a rare announcement by the surgeon general to declare youth e-cigarette use a public health epidemic.

Make no mistake — this deal provides absolutely no benefit to anyone but JUUL's founders and Big Tobacco investors by providing Altria and JUUL with a pathway to profit off a new generation addicted to nicotine, primarily because of JUUL, which is now in almost every classroom across America. This investment gives the tobacco industry direct access to a new pipeline of millions of youth e-cigarette users, most of whom were not smokers in the first place. Research shows that young people who vape are four times more likely to begin smoking deadly cigarettes.

The size of this deal, and Altria's confidence in doing it, makes JUUL the second most valuable private company after Uber Technologies Inc. It should give the FDA pause to reconsider the extent and timing of its newly proposed actions to bring this epidemic under control before JUUL coupons are on the back of every pack of Marlboro cigarettes, and vice versa.