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**truth® Calls Out Tobacco Industry for Profiling Disguised as Target Marketing**  
*New campaign, #STOPPROFILING, debuts during the Grammys*

**Washington, DC (February 12, 2017)** – Tobacco is not an equal opportunity killer. For decades, African Americans, low-income neighborhoods, LGBTQ communities and those with mental illness have been disproportionately affected by tobacco use—a result of profiling by the tobacco industry.

During tonight’s 59th annual GRAMMY Awards, a new **truth** campaign called #STOPPROFILING will shine a light on how the tobacco industry deliberately singles out communities that already face adversity and inequality with aggressive marketing tactics that equal profiling. The campaign features television host and comedic actress, Amanda Seales, known for her ability to take serious topics and make them resonate with a youth audience. Launching with two TV ads, the campaign will also include more than 10 pieces of custom content across digital and TV platforms.

The #STOPPROFILING campaign underscores that tobacco use is more than a public health issue, it’s a social justice issue. The fact-based **truth** campaign debuting tonight highlights two of these injustices specifically aimed at African American and low income neighborhoods as detailed below:

- [In major cities like D.C., there are up to ten times more tobacco advertisements in black neighborhoods than other neighborhoods.\\*<sup>1 2 3</sup>](#)
- [A recent study found that low-income neighborhoods are more likely to have tobacco retailers near schools than other neighborhoods.<sup>4</sup> The tobacco industry even went to the Supreme Court to ensure they could continue to sell their products near schools.<sup>5</sup>](#)

“The tobacco industry’s profiling marketing model means that where you live, who you love, your ethnicity, mental health, and income influence whether you smoke,” said Robin Koval, CEO and president of Truth Initiative, the national public health organization that directs and funds the **truth** campaign. “Tobacco is still the number one cause of preventable death and we’re sending a loud and clear message to the tobacco industry that what they do is not target marketing. It’s profiling and it has to stop.”

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\* In cities like Washington D.C., St. Louis and Boston

<sup>1</sup> Jennifer Cantrell, Jennifer M. Kreslake, Ollie Ganz, Jennifer L. Pearson, Donna Vallone, Andrew Anesetti-Rothermel, Haijun Xiao, and Thomas R. Kirchner. Marketing Little Cigars and Cigarillos: Advertising, Price and Associations with Neighborhood Demographics. American Journal of Public Health: October 2013. Vol. 103, No. 10, PP 1902-1909.

<sup>2</sup> Moreland-Russell S, Harris J, Snider D, Walsh H, Cyr J, Barnoya J. Disparities and Menthol Marketing: Additional Evidence in Support of Point of Sale Policies. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. 2013;10(10):4571-4583.

<sup>3</sup> Seidenberg AB, Caughey RW, Rees VW, Connolly GN. Storefront Cigarette Advertising Differs by Community Demographic Profile. American Journal of Health Promotion : AJHP. 2010;24(6):e26-e31. doi:10.4278/ajhp.090618-QUAN-196.

<sup>4</sup> D’Angelo, H., Ammerman, A., Gordon-Larsen, P., Linnan, L., Lytle, L., & Ribisl, K. M. (2016). Sociodemographic disparities in proximity of schools to tobacco outlets and fast-food restaurants. American Journal of Public Health, 106(9), 1556-1562.

<sup>5</sup> “Lorillard Tobacco Co., et al., Petitioners v. Thomas F. Reilly, Attorney General of Massachusetts; Altadis U.S.A. Inc., et al., Petitioners v. Thomas F. Reilly, Attorney General of Massachusetts.” Supreme Court of the United States. 00-596, 00-597. 2000. Court Brief.

This isn't the first time that **truth** has called attention to the marketing tactics of the tobacco industry. In 2008 and 2013, **truth** exposed "Project SCUM: Sub-Culture Urban Marketing," a 1996 tobacco company marketing campaign targeting LGBT and homeless people.

Though teen smoking of traditional cigarettes reached an all-time low of 6 percent in 2016, #STOPPROFILING shows that it's no coincidence that prevalence rates among certain communities are higher:

- [The marketing and promotion of menthol cigarettes have been targeted heavily toward African Americans.](#)<sup>6</sup> More than 88 percent of African American smokers aged 12 years and older prefer menthol cigarettes.<sup>6</sup> Each year, approximately 47,000 African Americans die from smoking-related disease with African Americans more likely to die from them than whites.<sup>7</sup>
- [LGBTQ young adults, 18-24, are nearly two times as likely to smoke as their straight peers.](#)<sup>8,9</sup>
- Individuals with mental illness account for up to 46 percent of cigarettes sold in the United States.<sup>10</sup>
- [People living below the poverty level in the U.S. are nearly twice as likely to smoke,](#) compared to those at or above the poverty level.<sup>11</sup>

"Today's teens are a generation with an unyielding commitment to diversity, inclusivity and equality," said Koval. "It's well documented that teens are passionate about social justice issues. By arming them with the facts about tobacco industry profiling tactics, we are empowering them to be the generation to end tobacco in every community nationwide."

Youth can call out tobacco industry profiling as it happens by tagging @truthorange and #STOPPROFILING. **truth** is also mobilizing youth nationwide via [thetruth.com](http://thetruth.com).

#STOPPROFILING is the latest extension of **truth's** *Finish It* campaign, which began in 2014. As part of the movement, millions of teens have taken steps to make their generation the one that ends smoking for good by taking action both nationally and locally through social media and on-the-ground community efforts.

The *Finish It* campaign and new #STOPPROFILING ads were created by **truth's** advertising agency of record 72andSunny. Media planning and buying is handled by Assembly, **truth's** media agency of record.

## **About truth**

**truth**<sup>®</sup> is one of the most successful and one of the largest national youth tobacco prevention campaigns. The campaign exposes the tactics of the tobacco industry, the truth about addiction, and the health effects and social consequences of smoking. **truth** gives teens facts to make their own informed choices about tobacco use and inspires them to use their social influence and creativity in the fight

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<sup>6</sup> [African Americans and Tobacco Use](#). CDC.

<sup>7</sup> Robinson RG, Sutton CD, James DA, Orleans CT. Pathways to Freedom: Winning the Fight Against Tobacco. U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services, CDC; 2004.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/PublicHealthEducation/PublicEducationCampaigns/ThisFreeLifeCampaign/default.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Lee JGL, Griffin GK, and Melvin CL. (2009). Tobacco use among sexual minorities, USA, 1987-2007 (May): a systematic review. Tob Control, Online First.

<sup>10</sup> Grant BF, Hasin DS, Chou SP, Stinson FS, Dawson DA. Nicotine Dependence and Psychiatric Disorders in the United States Results From the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions. Arch Gen Psychiatry. 2004;61(11):1107-1115.

<sup>11</sup> [National Health Interview Survey, 2015](#)

against tobacco. The campaign is credited with preventing hundreds of thousands of teens from starting to smoke, and is working to make this the generation that ends smoking for good. To learn more, visit [thetruth.com](http://thetruth.com). **truth** is part of Truth Initiative, a national public health organization dedicated to achieving a culture where all youth and young adults reject tobacco. To learn more about Truth Initiative's work speaking, seeking and spreading the truth about tobacco, visit [truthinitiative.org](http://truthinitiative.org).