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October 27, 2010

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
504 Broadway
Long Branch, NJ 07740

Re: Support of Proposal to Ban Smokeless Tobacco Use At World Series and by MLB Players

Dear Representative Pallone,

GASP is a 36 year-old nonprofit based in Summit, NJ. Our mission is to encourage tobacco-free lives for all people, and smokefree air for nonsmokers. We thank you for asking the Presidents of 2010 World Series teams (Mr. Baer, San Francisco Giants and Mr. Nolan, Texas Rangers) to ban their teams from using smokeless tobacco during the upcoming World Series. We fully support your position on banning the use of smokeless tobacco.

Each month, AC Nielson shares monthly convenience store sales of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco. This year, the figures consistently show that cigarette sales are down by approximately 2%, while smokeless tobacco is up by approximately 15% per month. Clearly, smokeless tobacco is becoming more popular and this is a serious public health concern.

If your proposed ban on smokeless tobacco is established through collective bargaining agreements and other legal means, by Mr. Baer and Mr. Ryan and Commissioner Selig and Mr. Weiner (Executive Director of Major League Baseball Players Association), it will positively influence a great many fans, including children who are impressionable and emulate the players, and lead to better public health protection for everyone.

New Jersey has one of the strongest statewide indoor smokefree air laws in the nation (except for casinos). GASP is also working to create smokefree and tobacco-free college campuses here in New Jersey. To further protect young people, GASP encourages policymakers to mandate 100% smokefree outdoor recreational areas. Children congregate in parks, beaches and playgrounds, to play and engage in sporting activities. Your work helps to change societal norms about tobacco use, which fosters sound public health policy.

Thank you for your active interest in the health of our nation and the lives of New Jerseyans.

Sincerely,

Karen Blumenfeld, Esq.

Executive Director