

Eric Jones' Testimony to Committee On Joint Ways & Means Subcommittee On Human Services, Salem, April 2, 2015:

Chairpersons Bates and Nathanson, members of the subcommittee, and attendees of this hearing. I am Eric Jones of Gresham and an ambassador and volunteer for the last 14 years for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN).

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today regarding the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement (TMSA) funding of the Tobacco Prevention and Education Program (TPEP) in the next biennium.

I lost my first wife, Patty Jones, nearly 12 years ago to lung and liver cancer from smoking. Patty had smoked for 34 years and become a laryngectomee (a person with no vocal cords who breaths through a stoma [hole] in the neck). As a laryngectomee, Patty learned esophageal speaking (burp talking) and went on to "speak" to over 4,000 Oregon school children about making wise tobacco choices. Kids threw away packs of cigarettes as they left her speaking sessions. I am so proud that my first wife made a significant difference in the fight against big tobacco!!

Patty spoke to Oregon school children as part of the TPEP program in affiliation with the American Cancer Society. We both volunteered in the TPEP Clackamas County program. We saw *firsthand* how the program positively impacted both children and adults and *saved lives*. We attended fairs, festivals, and other community events and engaged those we met. We had a "tar jar" to show what builds up in smokers' lungs, a "death penny" jar illustrating the number of people lost *daily* to tobacco use, a variety of educational materials and posters, and even a Wheel-of-Fortune wheel where kids spun the wheel, answered a question, and won prizes. This type of outreach really captured attendees' attention!

In 2001-2002, the program was far better funded in today's dollars than it has been over the past decade. Its outreach was successfully lowering the number of children and adult smokers in Oregon. That trend immediately began reversing when program funding was cut. Patty had an unquenchable passion for stopping others from suffering and dying from tobacco use. My second wife and I share that passion for protecting Oregon's children and adults from the ravages that tobacco use brings.

Please fund the TPEP program at \$5 million with TMSA dollars during the next biennium!!

Thank you for your time and attention today.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Jones
ACS CAN Ambassador, Volunteer
Gresham