



Republican National Hispanic Assembly

José Rivera
National Chairman

April 27, 1999

Hon. Dennis Hastert
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Room H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

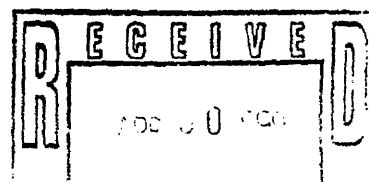
Dear Mr. Speaker:

As Chairman of the Republican National Hispanic Assembly, I write to convey our concerns about an intrusive, anti-business, big government action before the Congress which should be opposed; an Administration request for \$20 million in supplemental funds for the Department of Justice to sue the tobacco industry.

You have probably heard already from many individuals and organizations who share our view regarding the absurdity of this money grab. It is absurd, Mr. Speaker, because the Attorney General herself, following a Justice Department review, concludes that there is no basis for such suit. Now, it seems, the Administration wants to help its trial lawyer friends - some of whom pocketed upwards of more than \$75,000 per hour in fees in state cases - to further enrich themselves at taxpayer expense.

The Party that I am proud to serve has always upheld the free enterprise ethic as a cornerstone of our economy and of our society. We have also upheld the principle of individual responsibility. Now, however, we see society sliding down a dangerous, slippery slope toward legislation by litigation. We see suits against manufacturers of legal products - cigarettes, guns, even spilled coffee! There are reports about eventual suits against fast food marketers and other. Where will it end?

Late last year the industry reached a historic agreement with the state attorneys general which, along with other initiatives, provides for new rules in the marketplace. It also provides for more than \$200 billion to the states, for youth smoking prevention, the elimination of tobacco billboard advertising and many other things. This new order should be allowed to work unfettered by continued federal lawsuits.



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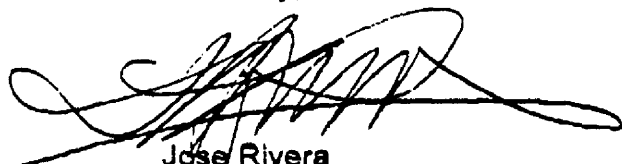
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Our members, Mr. Chairman, as well as the leading Hispanic business trade associations across the land, join me in urging you to halt this assault and to oppose the funding for the Justice Department. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jose Rivera
National Chairman

cc: Rep. Dick Armey, Majority Leader
Rep. Tom DeLay, Majority Whip
Sen. Pete Domenici, Chairman, Senate Budget Committee
Sen. Trent Lott, Majority Leader
Sen. William Roth, Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
Zake Montes, President, National Association of Hispanic Publications
Roberto de Posada, Exec. Director, Hispanic Business Roundtable
Steve Soto, President, Mexican American Grocers Association
Massey Villareal, Chairman, US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce