

## Numerous Think Tanks Worldwide Have Been Helping Big Tobacco

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A Guardian investigation has revealed that over 100 free-market think tanks from all over the globe, have been accepting donations from the tobacco industry in return for helping them fight tougher tobacco regulations.

According to a Guardian investigation published last month, Philip Morris International, British American Tobacco (BAT), Japan Tobacco, Altria and Reynolds American have all have donated to free-market think tanks. Some of these think tanks that came up in the investigation, are highly well-connected and influential in their countries and some have received funding from diplomatic outposts.

The analysis revealed that in the US, the Heritage Foundation, Cato Institute and Americans for Tax Reform have all accepted donations from Big Tobacco and went on to comment on tobacco policy. In the UK, similar patterns were observed by the Adam Smith Institute and the Institute of Economic Affairs did the same.

Arguing against regulations such as plain packaging

Amongst their pro-tobacco activities, these groups were involved in fighting plain cigarette packaging, writing to regulators in support of new tobacco products, and promoting industry-funded research. In one extreme case, an Africa-based think tank questioned whether the link between cancer and smoking “was yet to be empirically established”, before backing away from the claim.

However, in response to these accusations, the think tanks said they are fiercely independent, unswayed by any donations, and that they argue pro-business, low regulation and taxation positions as part of a broader free market philosophy.

Some of these organizations which took positions aligned with the tobacco industry’s interests were from countries including the US, UK, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Georgia, Ireland, Spain, Serbia, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Honduras, Venezuela, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Ghana, South Africa, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.