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## Proposed Tobacco Settlement Excludes Black Medi

By George E. Curry  
NNPA Editor-in-Chief

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - The U.S. Justice Department and the Tobacco-Free Kids Action Fund have reached an agreement with the four major tobacco companies that requires them to spend more than \$30 million advertising with the three major television networks and run full-page ads in 35 white and Hispanic newspapers as well as purchasing space on their respective websites but not make a single purchase from a black print or broadcast media company.

The 24-page proposed consent agreement reached Friday, was scheduled to go before U.S. District Judge Gladys Kessler in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia on Wednesday, Jan. 15, for final approval. The proceeding has been rescheduled for Jan. 22.

"We are shocked and deeply disappointed that the Justice Department, the Tobacco-Free Action Fund and the tobacco industry would all agree to sign off an advertising plan that totally disrespects the black community," said Cloves C. Campbell, chairman of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), a federation of nearly 200 black newspapers. "The industry's past efforts to target African-American consumers have been thoroughly documented. It is sad that an industry that sought to exploit our community with a product that is harmful to our health now seeks to further devalue African-Americans by ignoring the black media when it is being forced to atone what a federal judge determined was a deliberate effort to deceive the American public."

Peter S. Hamm, director of communications for the Tobacco-Free Kids Action, said on Monday that the media outlets were selected by Judge Kessler and disclosed in an order issued Aug. 17, 2006. Hamm said he did not know how she determined what media outlets would be utilized to carry the newspaper ads and television commercials.

A telephone call Monday requesting comment from the Justice Department was not returned.

The story of the agreement was first disclosed by Target Market News, published by Ken Smikle. The Chicago-based publication said an advertising source placed the value of the total buy at \$30 million to \$45 million.

The advertising campaign, which won't go into effect until all appeals have been exhausted by the tobacco companies, was agreed to as part of a settlement that found tobacco companies misled the public about the dangers of smoking. The four defendants are: Altria, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco, Lorillard and Philip Morris USA.

The U.S. Justice Department filed suit against the cigarette manufacturers on Sept. 22, 1999 charging that they had violated the Racketeer Influenced and Corruption Organizations Act (RICO). They were found guilty at the conclusion of a trial that lasted from Dec. 21, 2004 to June 9, 2005.

Judge Kessler wrote a stinging opinion saying, that the case "is about an industry, and in particular these Defendants, that survives, and profits, from selling a highly addictive product which causes diseases that lead to a staggering number of deaths per year, an immeasurable amount of human suffering and economic loss, and a profound burden on our national health care system. Defendants have known these facts for at least 50 years or more. Despite that knowledge, they have consistently, repeatedly, and with enormous skill and sophistication, denied these facts to the public, to the Government, and to the public health community - In short, Defendants have marketed and sold their lethal products with zeal, with deception, with a single-minded focus on their financial success, and without regard for the human tragedy or social costs that success exacted."

The judge prohibited the companies from committing similar acts going forward and ordered them to make "corrective statements" about the lies they had told about the dangers of smoking.

Kessler's ruling was unanimously upheld March 22, 2009 by a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. On June 28, 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to accept an appeal.

Carefully-crafted "corrective statements" that include the wording, placement and timing of TV commercials and the content, type and size of fonts to be used in newspaper ads were covered in the agreement reached Friday. The statements will acknowledge that the advertising is being done under court order and that companies had misled the public on the health effects of smoking, the addictiveness



Dr. Marc Lamont Hill

### NCCU to Honor Dr. Martin Luther King With Service and Celebration

Author, television host and commentator Dr. Marc Lamont Hill will bring his hip-hop perspective to North Carolina Central University Thursday, Jan. 16, as part of a series of events and service activities honoring the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Hill will be the keynote speaker at the university's MLK Convocation, which will take place at 9:45 a.m., in B.N. Duke Auditorium. This event is free and open to the public.

As one of the country's most prominent hip-hop generation intellectuals, Hill provides regular commentary for media outlets such as NPR, Washington Post, Essence magazine and The New York Times. He is the host of the nationally syndicated television show, "Our World with Black Enterprise," which airs Sunday mornings on TV One and in broadcast markets throughout the country.

Trained as an anthropologist, Hill is the author of two books: "Beats, Rhymes, and Classroom Life: Hip-Hop Pedagogy" and "The Politics of Identity and the Classroom and the Cell: Conversations on Black Life in America." Since 2009, Hill has been an associate professor of education on the faculty of Columbia University's Teachers College. He also holds an affiliated faculty appointment in African-American studies at the Institute for Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University.

The MLK Community Builder event, slated for 1:30 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 19, will bring together Durham residents to discuss ways of improving the local community through partnerships and collaboration. The event will take place in the A.E. Student Union. Tajiri Kimball, chief technology officer for Text2Give, a company that specializes in mobile communication to help nonprofit organizations reach their fundraising goals, will be the featured speaker. This event is sponsored by the NCCU Centennial Scholars Program and is open to the public. Refreshments will be served.

NCCU will kickoff its King Holiday Observance by ringing the Shepard Bell at 9:15 a.m. on Jan. 20. NCCU Chancellor Dr. Debra Saunders-White, United Way of the Greater Triangle CEO and President Mack Koonce and Ms. Felecia Quinn, resident of McDougald Terrace, a multi-family public housing community near NCCU, will ring the bell and provide brief remarks. The bell ringing ceremony is part of a national initiative spearheaded by the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta. The ringing of the bell symbolizes a commitment to choosing nonviolence and peace in 2014.

At the conclusion of the bell ringing, NCCU, in partnership with the United Way of the Greater Triangle, will sponsor community service activities to benefit the residents of McDougald Terrace. The event will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the LeRoy I. Walker Complex on the NCCU campus. More than 200 volunteers will create soup mixes and pantry items, make warm scarves and teddy bears and create educational flash cards for residents, in response to community requests. Financial and other educational workshops will be

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REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

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of smoking and nicotine and the health effects of secondhand smoke.

The companies will also admit that they falsely sold and advertised low-tar and light cigarettes as less harmful than regular cigarettes and designed cigarettes to enhance the delivery of nicotine.

Under the agreement, each company will decide whether to place commercials on CBS, ABC or NBC.

"The TV spots will run a total of five times per week, subject to the availability of network time and upon approval of the network(s) on which the spots will air," the agreement stipulates. "The five TV spots to be run each week will be run by each Defendant at its choice between 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. in the time zone in which the spot airs, between Monday and Thursday for one year."

In the event the desired time slot is unavailable, the companies must continue to purchase spots until they have run the corrective statements at least 50 times and have aired a total of 260 spots.

For newspapers, the tobacco companies are required to purchase a full-page ad in the first section of the Sunday edition of each newspaper. Each ad will contain one of the five corrective statements in their entirety. The companies are also required to advertise on the newspapers' web sites. Those same requirements will run in Spanish in Spanish-language newspapers.

The ads and commercials will state, "A Federal Court has ruled that Altria, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco, Lorillard, and Philip Morris USA deliberately deceived the American public and has ordered those companies to make these statements. Here is the truth:" Texts of the corrective statements will then be provided.

Under Judge Kessler's 2006 order, ads will be placed in the following newspapers: Atlanta Journal Constitution, Boston Globe, Boston Herald, Charlotte Observer, Chicago Sun Times, Chicago Tribune, Dallas Morning News, Florida Times Union, Fresno Bee, Ft. Worth Star-Telegram, Houston Chronicle, Los Angeles Times, Miami Herald, New York Daily News, New York Post, New York Sun, New York Times, Orlando Sentinel, Palm Beach Post, Philadelphia Inquirer, Richmond Times-Dispatch, Sacramento Bee, San Diego Union-Tribune, San Francisco Chronicle, St. Petersburg Times, Tallahassee Democrat, USA Today, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, LA Eastern Group Publications, San Francisco La Oferta Review, El Vistaz-Combo, NAHP, Chicago Lawndale Group News and NAHP Houston - Que Onda!

## The School Nobody Wanted - Except the Community

By Khalil Abdullah

Special to the NNPA from New America Media

The recently announced closure of Sarah T. Reed Senior High School in New Orleans will usher in the first school district in the country with no publicly run schools - and some community advocates see Reed's demise as a sign that the local community's voices don't count.

"People in our community in New Orleans feel like the voices of parents, students, and teachers have been left out. It's a perception, especially during this education reform process after Hurricane Katrina. That is how folks have been feeling for years," says Chris Sang, the communications director of the Vietnamese American Young Leadership Association (VAYLA), a community-based organization that has fought to save the school.

Reed is located in the eastern part of the Big Easy. Its students are drawn from the surrounding neighborhoods, which are predominantly composed of African American, Latino, and Vietnamese families.

The school's closure was announced by the Recovery School District (RSD), an agency established by the state in 2003 to address the problem of failing schools. The state legislature strengthened RSD's authority to expedite school closures in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, when many New Orleans schools were physically devastated and student and teacher populations became dispersed.

While the RSD oversees failing schools, other public schools in New Orleans operate under the Orleans Parish School Board and the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. But the majority of the schools that receive public funding in New

Orleans - only 10 percent of less than 90 schools - are under the RSD, which is now exclusively composed of charter schools. Charter schools receive public funding but are run by independent boards and are subject to different regulatory requirements than traditional public schools.

As of 2013, 85 percent of the city's nearly 43,000 public school students are enrolled in a charter school - by far the highest percentage in the country, according to the National Alliance of Public Charter Schools.

Sarah T. Reed and George Washington Carver Senior High School were the last public non-charter high schools under the RSD. Along with Reed's closure, it was simultaneously announced that George Washington Carver would transfer to charter control. Though some publicly run schools continue operating under the Orleans Parish School Board, the RSD will be the country's first all-charter school district.

Sang says VAYLA will continue to provide academic tutoring and counseling to support former Reed students, as it has for other students who have been reassigned to different schools.

"For students from our community, [it's meant] going to schools where there's this implicit sense that if you can't make it here, someone else will take your place," says Sang. "We see a lot of charters that have written off the local culture here - particularly the culture of African American students - and promoted more of a corporate message. The parents do not want their children to be looked at as just a number or a test score."

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