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Representing North Carolina's Eleventh Congressional District

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Rep. Shuler Statement on FDA-Tobacco Legislation

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Representative Heath Shuler released the following statement today on H.R. 1108, a bill designed to give the Food and Drug Administration regulatory authority over tobacco products. Rep. Shuler opposed H.R. 1108, which was brought up under a suspension of the traditional rules of the House and would require two-thirds support in order to pass.

“I have never smoked or used a tobacco product, and as the father of two small children, I am as strong an opponent of tobacco use as anyone in the Congress,” Rep. Shuler said. I applaud the intentions of this bill’s authors and their work, but I believe there is a better, safer, and more effective way to achieve these goals.”

“The FDA is currently dangerously overworked. This strain has had consequences including the mistaken shutdown of the domestic tomato industry, E. coli in being found in spinach and lettuce, Salmonella in Peanut Butter, and poisoned pet food. We should be doing more the help the FDA, not forcing more work on an already overburdened agency. We cannot sacrifice the safety of our food and our medicine for the sake of further regulating the tobacco products,” Rep. Shuler concluded.

Michael Levitt, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, has already raised objections to H.R. 1108. He has written, “Enactment of H.R. 1008 would direct (FDA) priorities and resources to a new regulatory area, which is not only inconsistent with the FDA’s mission, but also diverts attention from the significant public health matters of the safety of food, drugs, biologics, and medical devices.”

Secretary Leavitt has also written that H.R. 1108 would, “...impose an enormous implementation and resource burden on FDA at a time when it is faced with implementing the numerous provisions of the FDA Amendments Act of 2007 and undertaking efforts to enhance food safety and improve oversight of imported drugs and devices.”

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