Federal and State Candidates Asked to Declare Positions on Cancer Issues

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 19 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is asking federal and state candidates to go on the record with their positions on cancer issues. ACS CAN, the nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, has reached out to more than 500 candidates across the country in a nationwide effort to educate voters about laws and policies that help people fight cancer.

ACS CAN asked candidates to state their positions on the critical importance of increased federal funding for cancer research, strong implementation of the Affordable Care Act and enactment of comprehensive tobacco control policies.

"We cannot defeat cancer in this country with research alone – elected officials have the power to enact policies that impact our ability to prevent and fight the disease," said John R. Seffrin, PhD, chief executive officer of ACS CAN. "Lawmakers make critical decisions about funding groundbreaking medical research, expanding access to quality health care and enacting strong policies that discourage people from taking up the deadly habit of smoking. We hope all candidates will go on the record with their positions on these issues."

ACS CAN provided its own answers in the candidate questionnaires. ACS CAN:

- Supports a federal investment in cancer research and prevention as the surest way to continue to reduce the suffering and economic burden caused by the disease. Support from Congress is leading to the development of new tools for early detection and cancer-fighting treatments that are still in the early stages. A sustained federal investment in these efforts is necessary to make significant progress in the fight against cancer.
- Supports strong implementation of the recently enacted Affordable Care Act so that cancer patients, survivors and their families have full access to quality, affordable health care coverage. The new law, while not perfect, will meaningfully improve access to health care for millions of Americans who have or may face cancer.
- Support strong tobacco control policies, including an increase in the federal tobacco tax to reduce the number of youth and adults who begin smoking and to increase the number of smokers who quit. Every day, 3,500 kids try their first cigarette and 1,000 kids become regular smokers. ACS CAN supports substantially increasing the federal tobacco tax because every 10 percent increase in the cost of a pack reduces youth smoking by 7 percent and overall cigarette consumption by 4 percent.

"Cancer isn't partisan, and we need elected officials at all levels of government to make defeating this disease that will affect 1 out of 2 men and 1 out of 3 women in their lifetime a top priority," said Christopher W. Hansen, president of ACS CAN. "That is why we are asking everyone to learn where their candidates stand on public policy issues that will help make cancer history. And no matter who wins, our volunteers pledge to work with them to support laws and policies that help people fight cancer."

This year, more than 1.5 million people nationwide will be diagnosed with cancer and more than 569,000 will die from the disease.

The voter guides are part of a broader effort by ACS CAN volunteers to ensure that voters have accurate information about candidates and their position on issues that are critical to families affected by cancer. In addition to the guides, ACS CAN will conduct a radio media tour in several markets across the country, co-sponsor candidate debates, run print and online advertising and public service announcements in targeted cities and volunteers will participate in a number of grassroots activities including tracking candidates at public forums and canvassing local neighborhoods with the guides.

ACS CAN, the voice of more than 11 million cancer patients in this country and their families, is strictly non-partisan and does not endorse or contribute to any candidate or political party. The voter guide responses are available online at www.acscan.org/voterguide.

ACS CAN, the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, supports evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. ACS CAN works to encourage elected officials and candidates to make cancer a top national priority. ACS CAN gives ordinary people extraordinary power to fight cancer with the training and tools they need to make their voices heard. For more information, visit www.acscan.org.

SOURCE American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network