



# Attorney General Doug Peterson

# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Attorney General Peterson Joins Bipartisan Coalition in Urging Creative Community to Protect Young Viewers from Tobacco Imagery**

Lincoln – Nebraska Attorney General Peterson today joined a coalition of 43 attorneys general in urging the creative community to take action to protect young viewers from tobacco imagery in streamed movies and programs. The California and Nebraska-led coalition directed letters to five creative guilds as part of an ongoing effort to reduce youth exposure to tobacco. Last year, a coalition of 43 attorneys general sent letters urging the streaming industry to limit tobacco imagery in their video content. The creative guilds' assistance and support are critical to stopping the renormalization and glamorization of tobacco use, especially youth vaping.

“The creative community knows it has a tremendous opportunity to influence the minds of young people through streamed movies and programs. As attorneys general, we strongly urge the creators to use that influence for good, by not glorifying vaping, smoking or other addictive behaviors, but rather creating messages of health and hope to our youth. Their creation, good or bad, can be a part of influencing a young person for a lifetime,” stated Attorney General Peterson.

Tobacco is the number one preventable killer in the United States, with over 480,000 Americans dying from tobacco-related diseases every year. A growing body of evidence indicates that vaping can permanently damage the lungs and lead to a lifetime of tobacco and nicotine use.

In the race to launch new platforms, provide more content, and capture audiences, many streaming companies failed to consider the impact that easy access to movies and programs with tobacco imagery would have on children. In 2012, following a decade of studies, the Surgeon General concluded that “[t]here is a causal relationship between depictions of smoking in the movies and the initiation of smoking among young people.” More recently, a study by the Truth Initiative found that children who watch episodic programs with tobacco content are significantly more likely to begin vaping than those who are not exposed to such content. Even those with low levels of exposure were more than twice as likely to start using e-cigarettes, and those with high exposure were over three times more likely.

In today's letters, the bipartisan coalition urges Hollywood's creative guilds to use their collective influence to persuade members of the creative community to depict tobacco imagery more responsibly and to encourage streaming companies to:

- Adopt best practices that steer young viewers away from content with tobacco imagery, including excluding tobacco imagery in future content targeting children;
- Only recommend and promote tobacco-free titles for children and families;
- Mitigate the historic and cumulative impact of watching tobacco imagery by running strong anti-tobacco spots, especially before content with smoking or vaping;
- Display prominent and forceful tobacco warnings before content with tobacco imagery; and
- Offer effective parental controls, so families may be empowered to choose smoke-free content.

Letters were sent to the Directors Guild of America, Producers Guild of America, Screenwriters Guild of America, Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, and International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees.

Attorney General Peterson joins the attorneys general of Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, the Northern Mariana Islands, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, the Virgin Islands, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin in sending the letters.

A copy of the letter can be found here: <https://negov.sharefile.com/d-s982e34cb93b44c0a>.

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Suzanne Gage  
Director of Communications  
Nebraska Attorney General  
Office: 402.471.2656  
Mobile: 402.560.3518  
[Suzanne.gage@nebraska.gov](mailto:Suzanne.gage@nebraska.gov)

