

Investors Demand Action from Hollywood on Smoking in Youth-Rated Films, As You Sow Releases Transparency Tool

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OAKLAND, Calif., Oct. 3, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- A new website tracking mutual fund investments in companies responsible for kid's initiation to tobacco was released today by non-profit environmental health watchdog [As You Sow](#).

[Tobacco Free Funds](#) is a free online tool that allows investors *for the first time ever* to determine how their retirement accounts are invested in tobacco and tobacco-promoting industries. Tobacco-related illness is the number one cause of preventable death in the US.

The platform analyzes mutual funds and ETFs for stock investments in both cigarette companies and entertainment companies that produce and distribute youth-rated films with imagery of tobacco. [The Surgeon General and CDC report](#) that smoking in youth-rated (G, PG, PG-13) films significantly increases the likelihood that youth will begin to smoke. The CDC reports that: "Giving an R rating to future movies with smoking would be expected to reduce the number of teen smokers by nearly 1 in 5 (18%) and **prevent one million deaths from smoking among children alive today.**"

The new tool comes as **investor groups worth \$64 billion published an open letter** to the movie studio's parent companies, calling for kid-rated movies to be smoke-free. The investors' recommendations align with an [open letter signed by major US health organizations](#) (representing 630,000 doctors) published a month ago.

Austin Wilson, Environmental Health Program Manager at As You Sow said, "Investments in tobacco are embedded in our pension funds, IRAs, and 401(k)s but most of us are not even aware of it. This free platform shows people if they own tobacco stocks, it allows them to find funds without tobacco, and helps them talk to their retirement plan administrators. It also educates investors about the role that Hollywood plays in youth smoking."

Walt Disney is the only major movie studio that prohibits tobacco in movies it produces; Paramount, Universal, Warner Bros., Twentieth Century Fox, and Sony do not prohibit tobacco imagery. Overall, about [one in four youth-rated films included tobacco in 2016](#).

For more information, visit TobaccoFreeFunds.org.

Expert contact: Austin Wilson (510) 735-8149, awilson@asyousow.org

Communications contact: Cyrus Nemati (510) 735-8157, cnemati@asyousow.org

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