

Motivating Question: Cigarette Advertising

On January 1, 1971, the U.S. Congress passed legislation prohibiting cigarette producers from advertising on radio and television. Congress claimed it was acting in the public interest, given recent scientific evidence of a link between cancer and smoking. There were some people, however, who argued that the cigarette producers themselves would be the principal beneficiaries of the ban on radio and TV advertising.

- a. Why might the producers benefit from government legislation forbidding their principal medium of advertising?
- b. There is considerable evidence that the producers did not want the ban. (For example, they appealed the law to the U.S. Supreme Court - and lost). Given your answer to (a), why do you think the producers opposed the law?