

Washington Clean Indoor Air Act Discussion Points

AMENDING WASHINGTON'S CLEAN INDOOR AIR ACT 2005

THE OBJECTIVES SHOULD INCLUDE: PROTECTING WORKERS and their JOBS

An estimated 100,000 jobs in this state would be negatively impacted by an extreme indoor smoking ban. While not all 100,000 workers are working directly in a designated smoking area, the establishments where they work designate a smoking area, and rely on the customers who choose to go into it to keep the business open, and the jobs filled. The extreme ban as imposed illegally in Pierce County in 2004 put hundreds of people out of work, as documented in media coverage at the time. Workers have the right to know of hazards in the workplace, with federal and state laws in place to insure it. OSHA/WISHA standards and measurements are well established and universally accepted worker protections, and should be included to provide consistency. Statute must rely on real science rather than emotional spin, and should use the resources available to protect the workers from real hazards in the workplace.

PRESERVING and PROTECTING LOCAL ECONOMIES

The estimated 2,000+ businesses with designated smoking areas generate city, county and state tax revenues. In addition, their suppliers, vendors, and manufacturers produce revenues and jobs. The extreme ban in Pierce County last year provides evidence of income loss on the part of these taxpayers, some of which is documented by the Quarterly Reports of the Washington State Gambling Commission for the quarters of 2004 when the extreme Pierce County ban was in place. A significant portion of the entertainment dollar is spent by the 24% of the people who smoke. An extreme ban on indoor smoking will only cause smokers to seek entertainment facilities which allow them to smoke.

RESPECTING PROPERTY OWNERS CHOICES

Washington's lawmakers were among the first in the nation to limit indoor smoking, when in 1985 the Clean Indoor Air Act became law. In their wisdom, they identified certain types of public places PRIVATELY OWNED/leased, where the owner of the business could CHOOSE to designate a smoking area. This market driven choice allows business owners to chart their own course, and meet the demands of their respective patrons. Today, nearly 80% of Washington's restaurants are NON-SMOKING by choice. Other entertainment/hospitality venues continue to expand their non-smoking areas, and relatively few remain smoking areas in their entirety. The KEY HERE IS THE CHOICE business/property owners have that must be protected against an extreme ban.

PROTECTING BORDER COUNTIES

In addition to the borders of Idaho, Oregon and Canada, Washington's businesses are extremely vulnerable to the 29+ sovereign Tribal Nations who would BE EXEMPT from any state/local legislation regarding indoor smoking bans. While the Pierce County ban was in effect, neighboring cities, towns and Tribal Nations revenues increased dramatically, while the Pierce County businesses affected by the ban lost as little as 20% and as much as 60% of their income.

PROHIBITING MINORS FROM ENTERING A DSA

Most Designated Smoking Areas are also licensed to sell alcohol, or conduct games of chance, which precludes minors admission. 2005 legislation should include a specific prohibition for minors entering or having access to a Designated Smoking Area..