

THE NEED FOR STRONG SMOKE-FREE LAWS

The scientific evidence on the health risks of exposure to secondhand smoke is clear, convincing, and overwhelming. Secondhand smoke is a known cause of lung cancer, heart disease, low birth-weight births, and chronic lung ailments such as bronchitis (particularly in children), as well as other health problems.

STRONG SMOKE-FREE LAWS ARE IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

- Everyone has the right to breathe clean air in public places and at work.
- Cigarette smoke is a toxic soup of more than 7,000 known chemical compounds. According to the National Cancer Institute, there are 69 known or probable cancer-causing chemicals in cigarette smoke.
- According to the CDC, nearly 50,000 Americans die each year from lung cancer and heart disease attributable to secondhand smoke exposure.
- In a 2009 report, the Institute of Medicine concluded that smoke-free laws reduce the number of heart attacks and save lives.
- Smoke-free restaurant and bar laws help protect restaurant and bar employees and patrons from the harms of secondhand smoke.
- Scientific research clearly shows that even the newest ventilation technologies are incapable of removing secondhand smoke and its toxic constituents from the air.
- Smoke-free laws help the 7 out of every 10 smokers who want to quit smoking by providing them with public environments free from any pressure or temptation to smoke.

CURRENT SMOKE-FREE STATES AND CITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

As of January 2012, 64.5% of the U.S. population lives in areas that have passed strong smoke-free laws covering restaurants and bars – a number that has nearly doubled in size in 3 years.

- 29 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico have passed smoke-free laws that cover restaurants and bars. The states are: Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.
- Hundreds of cities and counties across the country have also taken action.

SMOKE-FREE LAWS DO NOT HARM BUSINESS AT RESTAURANTS AND BARS

- In recent years an outpouring of support for smoke-free restaurant and bar laws has developed from states, cities and counties across the country.
- Numerous scientific and economic analyses show that smoke-free laws do not hurt restaurant and bar patronage, employment, sales, or profits. In fact, sometimes they even produce slightly positive trends.
- Members of the business community, including restaurant and bar owners, are becoming increasingly supportive of smoke-free laws. They recognize that these laws can have a positive impact on public health and the health of their business.
- The 2008 Zagat Survey: America's Top Restaurants of 132,000 Americans noted that, "The verdict on smoking is overwhelming with 77% of diners saying they'd eat out less if smoking were permitted in local restaurants, and only 2% saying they'd dine out more."

VOTERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR SMOKE-FREE LAWS

The results of many ballot initiatives, as well as polls conducted in states and communities throughout the country, show widespread voter support for smoke-free laws – both before and after these laws go into effect.

For more information on smoke-free laws and secondhand smoke, visit www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/index.php?CategoryID=19