



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Jan. 25, 2007

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## **Campaign for Smokefree Air renews legislative push for statewide smokefree workplaces**

**Lansing, Mich.** – Backed by an ever-growing coalition of supporters, two Michigan Senators introduced legislation this week to ensure healthy, smokefree workplaces statewide, including restaurants, bars, office buildings and factories.

Sens. Ray Basham, D-Taylor, and Tom George, R-Texas Township, are renewing their pledge to make Michigan a healthy, smokefree state for all workers with Senate Bills 109 and 110.

The Campaign for Smokefree Air (CSA) has been working with both lawmakers to make Michigan the 27<sup>th</sup> state to protect its workers from deadly exposure to secondhand smoke. For the first time, more than half of all Americans live in a city or state with smokefree workplace protection laws.

“We are hopeful that the new Legislature, under the leadership of newly elected Speaker Dillon and Senate Majority Leader Bishop, will see that Michigan workers want and need this legislation,” said Judy Stewart, a CSA spokesperson. “We know the entire state will benefit from smokefree policies – it’s better for businesses and it’s better for our health.”

In June 2006, U.S. Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona released a report on the harmful effects of secondhand smoke, which stated the only way to protect Americans from the dangers of secondhand smoke exposure was through comprehensive smokefree workplace legislation and policies.

Basham has been a dedicated advocate for smokefree legislation for nearly a decade.

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“Exposure to secondhand smoke is a serious health risk,” Basham said. “Smoke can’t read signs that say non-smoking. Smoke doesn’t follow the rules. Smoke does not stay in the smoking section. Plus, it’s wrong for hard-working people such as bartenders, waitresses, factory workers and others – to be exposed to cancer-causing smoke just because they need to earn a paycheck and provide for their families.”

George, who chairs the Senate Health Policy Committee, also is a physician and has been working on numerous healthy living measures while in office.

“Deaths and disease occur because tobacco users are not the only ones who breathe smoke – all the people around them inhale it too,” George said. “Hard-working people and innocent children should not be subjected to cancer causing particles in the air they breathe at work or at play. It’s time for the Legislature to take a stand on this life and death issue.”

SBs 109 and 110 are supported by George’s colleagues in the medical profession, said Kenneth J. Edwards, MD, a St. Joseph orthopedic surgeon and chair of the Michigan State Medical Society board of directors.

“For too long, Michigan has lagged behind the rest of the nation in wellness initiatives and the effect on our state’s overall health demands a change,” Edwards said. “This legislative initiative brings Michigan into step with the rest of the nation’s progressive states that care about the health of their residents.”

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## **BACKGROUNDER**

### **Air Quality Tour**

Throughout 2006, CSA sponsored an Air Quality Tour around the state, testing smoking and nonsmoking sections of more than 90 restaurants and bars in eight cities. Tests were taken to examine the air quality levels, as established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The results of the study showed that cigarette and cigar smoke overwhelmingly decreases the air quality for patrons and employees, regardless of their presence in a smoking or nonsmoking section. The EPA deemed the air quality measured in each city as unhealthy.

### **Good for Business, Good for Health**

Numerous studies have been conducted in other states following their enforcement of smokefree workplaces, which all show that businesses benefit from smokefree environments. In the first year after its smokefree law was enacted, New York City created more than 10,600 additional hospitality jobs and business tax receipts from bars and restaurants increased by nearly 9 percent.

After a year and half of smokefree workplaces, a study in Pueblo, Colo., showed a 30-percent decrease in heart attacks. A similar study in Helena, Mont., showed the number of patients admitted for heart attacks dropped by almost half.

### **Risks of Secondhand Smoke**

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, American Cancer Society and the Journal of the American Medical Association:

- Secondhand smoke contains more than 4,000 substances, more than 60 of which are known or suspected to cause cancer.
- Secondhand smoke is third leading preventable cause of death in the U.S. – killing 38,000 to 65,000 nonsmokers every year.
- Food service workers appear to be 50 percent more likely than the general population to develop lung cancer, largely because many of them are exposed to secondhand smoke on the job.

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### **Economic Costs of Secondhand Smoke**

Michigan loses \$3.4 billion a year from smoking-caused productivity losses. The state's Medicaid program spends \$1.04 billion to cover health costs associated with smoking.

### **Michigan Residents Support Smokefree Legislation**

CSA sponsored a poll in March 2005 that showed 63 percent of Michigan registered voters support a new state law to ensure smokefree workplaces, restaurants and bars. The poll was conducted among 600 registered voters, with a margin of error +/- 4 percent. The poll also found that restaurants, clubs and bowling alleys in Michigan will benefit from a new smokefree law, with 79 percent of respondents indicating they would go to restaurants "more often" or "just as often" if they become smokefree; and 70 percent of respondents indicating the same about bars, clubs and bowling alleys.

### **About CSA**

The Campaign for Smokefree Air is a grassroots coalition with more than 60 members, including leadership from the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association of Michigan, Michigan Hospital Association and Michigan State Medical Society, as well as other statewide groups who support eliminating secondhand smoke dangers in workplaces, restaurants and bars. For more information about the Campaign for Smokefree Air, please visit [www.MakeMIAirSmokefree.com](http://www.MakeMIAirSmokefree.com)

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