



Legislative Update & Action Alert

March 5, 2007

Please read and forward to your colleagues and networks!

House Health Committee Approves HB 24 Bill Moves to House Floor This Week Call your Representative to Urge Support

On Thursday, March 1, the House Health Committee voted to approve an amended version of HB 24, sponsored by Representatives Jennifer Weiss (D-Wake) and Rick Glazier (D-Cumberland), to prohibit smoking in state government buildings. This is the first of several important pieces of legislation that will be heard this session that will protect North Carolinians from exposure to secondhand smoke and restore local authority to make public places smoke-free.

As amended, HB 24 would:

- 1) prohibit smoking in buildings owned, leased or occupied by state government;
- 2) provide local option for local governments to enact regulations to prohibit smoking in buildings owned, leased or occupied by local government, and any place on a public transportation vehicle owned, leased or occupied by local government and used by the public;
- 3) provide any local airport authority the option to prohibit smoking in their facilities.

During the House Health Committee hearing, Rep. Glazier introduced an amendment to clarify a point debated during the hearing. The amendment stated that if state or local government leases space in a privately owned building (such as a strip mall), then the entire building is not required to become smoke-free. Only the space that is leased and occupied by state government must prohibit smoking. The amendment also clarified that within the local government option, the same provision applies to leased local government space in a privately owned facility. The amended bill passed on a voice vote of the Health Committee with only one member voting against the bill.

To view HB 24 in its amended form, go to:

<http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2007/Bills/House/HTML/H24v1.html>

and look for the version of HB 24 approved by the House Health Committee on 3-1-07 (it had not been posted as of 3-4-07).

Please Contact Your House Representative No Later Than Wednesday Afternoon to Urge Support of HB 24!

HB 24 is expected to be considered on the House floor on Wednesday afternoon. Please help us reach all 120 House members by Wednesday. Call or email your representative ASAP to urge him or her to vote “yes” on HB 24:

- **HB 24 will make all state government buildings smoke-free and provide an option to local governments to make local government buildings and transportation systems smoke-free.**
- **Making all state government buildings smoke-free is a logical next step after making the General Assembly buildings smoke-free. It is time to protect *all* state workers.**
- **According to the US Surgeon General, there is NO safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke: secondhand smoke kills. Our state government has an obligation to protect state and local workers from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke.**
- **Nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke have been shown to have many of the same tobacco-related diseases as active smokers. Secondhand smoke has been shown to increase nonsmokers’ risk of heart disease, stroke, and cancer.**
- **As little as thirty minutes of exposure can trigger a heart attack in someone with heart disease or risk factors for heart disease (Nat’l Cancer Institute). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) warns, "...all patients at risk of coronary heart disease or with known coronary artery disease should be advised to avoid all indoor environments that permit smoking".**
- **According to a September Elon College poll, 86 percent of respondents said that they agree or strongly agree that employees in North Carolina should be able to work in a smoke-free environment.**

For a full set of talking points about the dangers of secondhand smoke, go to the Alliance website:

http://www.ncallianceforhealth.org/pdfs/Talking_Points_SHS_Gen.pdf

How to Contact Your Representative:

All legislators can be reached by calling 919-733-4111 and asking for your representative by name. If you are not sure of the name of your representative, check the General Assembly’s website at:

http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/GIS/Representation/Who_Represents_Me/Who_Represents_Me.html

OR use this listing below:
(All phone numbers at 919 area code)

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What *MORE* can you do to promote the secondhand smoke issue?

Have your organization, its board members, staff and volunteers sign the Alliance’s secondhand smoke resolution to demonstrate your support for making NC’s worksites and public places smoke-free. Access the resolution by going to the Alliance’s website at: <http://www.rtpnet.org/alliance/resolution.html>

The website is now capable to taking signatures directly on–line. Also available on our website are fact sheets, talking points and other resources on secondhand smoke and the cigarette tax.

Stay tuned for further developments on efforts to make North Carolina’s worksites and public places smoke-free!

For additional information about secondhand smoke issues or NC’s cigarette tax, access the Alliance website at www.ncallianceforhealth.org for talking points and other resources.

Call 919-463-8328
or e-mail ncalliance@heart.org for more information