



Legislative Update

June 28, 2007

Please read and forward to your colleagues and networks!

HB 24 Approved by Senate and House Concurs; Bill Awaits Governor's Signature

This week HB 24 was overwhelmingly approved by the Senate (48-1) and concurred to by the House (110-3). One of the Alliance's top legislative priorities this session is now on its way to the Governor's desk for his signature. HB 24, sponsored by Reps. Jennifer Weiss (D-Wake) and Rick Glazier (D-Cumberland), 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. This bill will go a LONG way toward protecting many thousands of state employees and citizens from the dangers of secondhand smoke.

Many, many people have put a lot of hard work and effort into getting this bill this far! Many thanks to all the advocates who called legislators at various points in the legislative process to urge approval of this bill. Most especially, please take a moment to thank the bill sponsors Rep. [Jennifer Weiss](#) and Rep. [Rick Glazier](#) as well as the Senate bill (SB43) sponsor Senator [William R. Purcell](#). They skillfully lead this bill through the legislative process and routinely kept the Alliance informed about the bill's progress. They have been regular supporters of smoke-free legislation and deserve our thanks and appreciation for their time and efforts on HB 24. Please take a moment to thank them (simply double click on their names to get their email addresses)!

Here's a run down on the bill's movements this week:

On Tuesday, HB 24 was approved by the Senate by a vote of 48 to 1 (Senator Don East, R- Surry, cast the sole vote against the bill). During debate, a technical amendment to the bill was approved to make the bill consistent with other smoke-free legislation also winding through the legislative process (the UNC smoke-free bill and the Tobacco-Free Schools bill). In addition, Senator Eddie Goodall (R-Union) again introduced an amendment that had narrowly failed in the Senate Commerce Committee. Senator Goodall's amendment would have allowed smoking in property owned by the state but leased by other tenants. After some debate, the amendment was voted down by a vote of 20 to 29. Many thanks to Senator William Purcell (D-Scotland) who did an excellent job leading the floor debate!

On Thursday, the House received HB 24 from the Senate and voted to accept the Senate's technical changes by a vote of 110-3. The bill is now on its way to the Governor for his signature. All indications are that the Governor will likely sign the bill into law. The Governor has 30 days to sign a bill into law or it becomes law automatically, unless it is vetoed. We will keep you posted on any developments related to the Governor's intention to sign HB 24.

Action on other Tobacco-Related Legislation:

This week **SB 1086, Tobacco-free Schools**, passed the House Education Committee and the full House by a vote of 103-7. This bill mandates that any school systems that has not yet gone tobacco-free do so by August 1, 2008.

Eighty-seven of the state's 115 school systems are already tobacco free. This bill, sponsored by Senator William Purcell (D-Scotland), passed the Senate on April 11. The bill will be sent back to the Senate for concurrence. To view this bill, go to: <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/Sessions/2007/Bills/Senate/HTML/S1086v4.html>

Budget Negotiations Slow; Continuing Resolution Moves in Both Chambers

In a sign that budget negotiations are moving slowly, both the House and Senate this week began considering continuing budget resolutions so that the state may continue to run based on the current fiscal year's budget (Saturday, June 30 is the end of the fiscal year). The continuing resolution, expected to be approved by both chambers this evening, gives lawmakers one month to resolve the remaining differences between the House and Senate budget proposals . . . or pass another continuing resolution. The Alliance has heard that the continuing resolution will include a provision to maintain the state sales tax at the current rate (i.e. no reduction in the sales tax) and allow the temporary increase in the income tax on the highest wage earners to sunset (i.e. a tax cut for high income earners).

The Alliance continues to hear that the NC Quitline will receive \$500,000 in non-recurring funds for the coming fiscal year. We are told that negotiations are still underway for Child Nutrition services funding.

The Alliance continues to advocate for increased Child Nutrition and NC Quitline funding and will keep you informed as developments in the budget process unfold. If you have further questions about these budget items or other healthy weight policy initiatives, please contact Elizabeth Outten at eaoutten@gmail.com or (919) 602-6648.

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.

**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