

**State of Pennsylvania
House Health Committee
HB 682: Clean Indoor Air Act Hearing
Written Testimony as Submitted by the Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights**

To the Honorable Members of the House Health Committee;

On behalf of Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights (ANR), we would like to submit written testimony *in support* of House Bill 682 to amend and strengthen the Clean Indoor Air Act. Since our inception in 1976, ANR has been protecting employees and the public from secondhand smoke in workplaces and public places –from airplanes and shopping malls to offices, bars, and casinos. With half of the US population living in municipalities and states with 100% smokefree workplace laws, we know these laws are effective in reducing exposure to secondhand smoke, improving the health of employees and patrons, reducing healthcare costs related to secondhand smoke, and in general making communities safer places to live, work, and play.

Neighboring states like Ohio, Maryland, New York, and Delaware already require all commercial gaming facilities to be 100% smokefree indoors. Other states like Massachusetts, Maine, Colorado, and Illinois have too. A growing number of sovereign tribes have also been making their facilities smokefree indoors. In fact, there are now more than 500 smokefree casinos and gambling venues in the US.

The clear lesson learned from states like Ohio, Maryland, and New York is that being smokefree indoors isn't a barrier for casinos to compete successfully in a regional market. After all, it just isn't a hardship to step out onto an outdoor smoking patio off the gaming floor to smoke. But what smokefree indoor air does do is save lives of real people and dramatically improve the health of a region's workforce. Pennsylvania has a chance to help achieve regional parity on this important health issue. Gaming and hospitality job creation shouldn't come at the expense of sickening the very people and communities those jobs are supposed to be helping.

Today, more than 82% of the US population are nonsmokers and smoking rates are at a record low and still falling. Nonsmokers are the vast majority of today's gaming market. The fear and doom-and-gloom anecdotes spread by Big Tobacco 20 years ago of smoking and restaurants going together, and smoking and gambling going together just don't hold up anymore.

Opponents of smokefree will share cherry-picked data from far-away places, carefully omitting context like the Recession and rapid growth of regional gaming competition in creating their anecdotal myths. They will also neglect to mention the staggering – yet completely preventable – toll of death and disease that secondhand smoke causes to the gaming workforce in states like Pennsylvania.

Expert agencies such as the Office of the Surgeon General affirm that even sophisticated casino ventilation systems, smoking rooms, or smoking sections do not and cannot address the health hazards of secondhand smoke. Other key agencies and organizations such as

ASHRAE (standard setting body for ventilation) and NIOSH also affirm this and also state that smokefree policies should mean being free of secondhand e-cigarette/vaping emissions as well.

Twenty five years ago this year, US flights became smokefree for the health of flight crews and passengers alike. Airlines and tobacco companies said it wasn't needed and that it wouldn't work, that smoking was "just part of flying" and "part of the job" for flight attendants. Today those arguments seem ridiculous - of course airplanes are smokefree - but some still say the exact same thing about casino and bar workers and their deadly exposure to secondhand smoke in their job. The bottom line is that everyone deserves the right to breathe smokefree air in their workplace, including air free of e-cigarette emissions. The way to achieve this is with a smokefree indoor air law that provides Pennsylvania's hospitality workforce and public the same smokefree indoor air standard that neighboring states already have in place.

The only way to ensure protection of all Pennsylvanians is with a 100% smokefree law that includes ALL workplaces - restaurants, bars, casinos, and private clubs. This is an opportunity to save the lives of constituents by making their health a priority. Please feel free to contact the Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights with any questions or for further information on smokefree policies.

We look forward to including Pennsylvania on our list of 100% smokefree states. Please contact me if you have any questions or would like additional information on the benefits of smokefree environments or the health effects of exposure to secondhand smoke and secondhand aerosol emitted from electronic smoking devices.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Hallett, MPH
Executive Director
Americans for Nonsmokers Rights
2530 San Pablo Ave., Ste. J
Berkeley, CA 94702
510.841.3032 office

www.no-smoke.org
www.smokefreecasinos.org
www.protectlocalcontrol.org
www.goingsmokefree.org