

Successful Rally at the Indiana Statehouse Helps Move Bill to the Senate!

Breathing smokefree air is not just a privilege. It's a right. Advocates in the form of students, cancer survivors, business owners, and community leaders rallied at the Indiana Statehouse last month to urge lawmakers to pass a statewide comprehensive smoking law that would ban lighting up in workplaces, including restaurants, bars, gambling facilities and nightclubs.

Attendees of Indiana Campaign for Smokefree Air's official lobby day were greeted by Representative and co-author of the bill, Charlie Brown, and heard motivational speeches from members of the coalition for Smokefree Air. Supporters were then released to meet with their state representatives before the House was to hear the bill later that day.



Advocates meet with Representative Moseley at the ICASA Day at the Statehouse.

Currently several exemptions have been added to the bill, now scheduled to be heard by the Senate at the end of this month, despite the pressure of supporters to pass a complete and comprehensive smoking ban. Regardless of these setbacks, members of the coalition are remaining positive about the victory in the House.

In fact, Danielle Patterson, chair of the Indiana Campaign for Smokefree Air and government relations director for the American Heart Association, is hopeful that some of these exemptions will be repealed by the Senate. She explained, "The current legislation that just passed the House would exempt bars, gaming facilities, veterans' homes and fraternal organizations. Still, we are pleased that it is now moving to the Senate where we will work with lawmakers to strengthen the bill and present the governor with a comprehensive bill for his signature." The bill passed out of the House overwhelmingly, by a vote of 68 to 31.



Hundreds of advocates turned out in support of smokefree air.

With strong statistical analysis which reports 1,240 Indiana adult nonsmoker deaths per year and a report by the State of Tobacco Control which gave Indiana an "F" in nearly every category, including smokefree air, lawmakers will have a tough time rejecting this bill.