

# Smokers' Advocate

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## Change: The One Clear Mandate For '93

One message that came through loud and clear in the recent election: Voters want to see big changes in the way our government works; and they will not tolerate lawmakers who are content with the status quo.

This call for change was demonstrated at the legislative level, where more than 100 men and women were newly elected to the U.S. Congress, and where thousands of individuals will be sworn in at the state and local levels of government.

Voters expressed their concern that government spending is out of control, that taxes are too high and that tax increases too often are sought as a solution of first resort.

It is easy to see why voters are so fed up. The U.S. Commerce Department reported recently that last year, state governments spent more than twice as much money as they took in. Governments are increasingly adopting a "spend today, pay tomorrow" attitude, which is saddling more and more states and localities with multi-million and even billion dollar deficits.

In addition, the U.S. Census Bureau reports

that state and local governments both grew last year. Currently, 4.5 million Americans are employed by state governments at a cost of \$9.4 billion, while \$22.1 billion is spent to pay the 10.9 million Americans now employed at the local level.

So at a time when government has less money to spend, it is expanding its workforce. No wonder voters are concerned. If business owners don't have the money to expand their stores or hire new sales clerks, they must wait until they do have the money. If taxpaying citizens must make the hard decisions to live within their means, government should be forced to do the same.

John Berthoud, legislative director of the American Legislative Exchange Council, an organization comprised of state legislators, explained the advantages of controlling government spending in a recent interview. "Less government means lower taxes and greater prosperity for our people."

Berthoud went on to say that if government does get spending under control, "Businesses will have more money to re-invest in successfully competing with foreign competition. Individuals will be able to keep more of what they make and thus have greater incentives to innovate and produce."

Legislators taking office in 1993 are aware that the public expects changes in the way government is currently run. Nevertheless, this is no time to take the heat off of lawmakers recently elected. The public has a responsibility to stay abreast of legislative developments, and to express their feelings about important issues to their elected officials. Otherwise, a great opportunity for fundamental change will be lost. □

### HOTLINE

Let us know what's happening in your area. Call the Hotline weekdays between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. EST.

**(212) 880-3680**

## NORTHEAST

**New Jersey.** A coalition of 37 organizations, including many anti-tobacco groups, wants the state legislature to raise excise taxes on cigarettes by an outrageous \$10 per carton, to \$14.00. This figure does not include federal and local taxes that smokers must also pay.

**New York.** Good economic news out of Albany, for a change. Legislative leaders project a budget surplus by the end of the current fiscal year, which ends in March. The reason? Better fiscal management. That means there's no reason to hike cigarette taxes.

**Rhode Island.** T.F. Green State Airport in Providence approves an Accommodation Lounge for smokers. This assures that both non-smoking and smoking airport visitors will have their preferences met.... Pawtucket City Council defeats a proposal to ban tobacco advertising on city-owned property by a 7-2 margin.

## SOUTH

**Arkansas.** Initiative to raise cigarette excise taxes by \$2.50 per carton is kept off the ballot by technicalities. Warning: Tax supporters have already warned that they'll be back next year.

**Florida.** How quickly they forget! House Regulatory Reform Committee recommends smoking bans in beauty salons and barber shops. Last year, outpouring of protests by beauticians, barbers and by their customers resulted in repeal of identical ban.

## GREAT PLAINS

**Nebraska.** An effort to fund state spending programs, including a tree planting program, by hiking the state cigarette excise tax, misses the ballot by 255 signatures.... Lincoln City Manager Larry Primeau rethinks a plan to ban smoking from city-owned properties, following an outpouring of public opposition. [See related story on p. 4]



## MIDWEST

**Indiana.** Be on guard for efforts to hike cigarette taxes in '93. Some legislators have already announced plans to pre-file a measure to raise the state tax by \$.50 per carton.

**Ohio.** Alert for '93: Anti-tobacco coalition seeks to raise cigarette excise taxes from \$1.80 to \$4.30 per carton to pay for uninsured health care and anti-smoking programs. This despite evidence that increasing the tax would cause smokers to cross the border into any one of the three lower-tax border states.

## MID ATLANTIC

**North Carolina.** Lawmakers are being pressured by special interest groups to increase cigarette taxes to pay Medicaid costs. So far, no specific amount has been mentioned.

## SOUTHWEST

**Texas.** '93 Tax Alert: Anti-smoking coalition has announced its agenda for next year, and cigarette tax increases are a top priority. The group wants the legislature to hike the state excise tax by \$2.50 per carton, to an outrageous \$6.60 per carton.

## FAR WEST

**California.** Wearing "Ban the Ban" buttons, 57 speakers persuade Chino Hills City Council to shelve for up to 45 days a bill that calls for a ban on smoking in all enclosed spaces except private homes. Council members and business owners are working on a compromise.... The city of Colfax also decides to compromise, and implements plan to accommodate both smokers and non-smokers in restaurants.

## NORTHWEST

**Washington.** State Health Care Commission recommends higher tobacco taxes to pay for media and education programs. State excise tax is already \$3.10 per carton.



## Your Tax Dollars At Work

Along with the fresh faces of the Clinton Administration, there will be some brand new faces in the 103rd Congress, which will have the largest incoming freshman class in history. Of the 435 individuals who comprise the House of Representatives, 110 will be newly elected. On the Senate side, 11 to 13 new senators will take their seats in the 100-member chamber, depending on the results of a run-off election in Georgia scheduled for Novem-

cycles or walk more often.

- The \$320,000 set aside to purchase the house of President William McKinley's in-laws in Ohio.
- The \$150,000 spent to examine the Hatfield-McCoy Feud.

Citizens for a Sound Economy plans to keep an eye on Congressional spending. As Paul Beckner, author of Wasting America's Money II, puts it, "Money can't grow in our pockets if it's constantly uprooted for transplantation in Washington ... You can help influence your local lawmaker to vote against wasting more of America's money. You can encourage your representative or senators to get on board those proposals that would benefit this country's balance sheet." □

### THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN!



ber 24, and a special election in North Dakota, set for December 4.

There is the promise of change. But will this change bring about more responsible government spending?

According to Wasting America's Money, II, a book produced by the Washington, D.C.-based public-interest group, Citizens for a Sound Economy (CSE), federal spending is way out of control. And while recent reports about Congressional perks have raised the public ire, Wasting America's Money, II cited numerous other examples of reckless spending. For example:

- A \$19 million grant allowed by the 1990 Farm Bill to study the emission of methane gas from cows.
- The \$5 million spent by the Defense Department to erect a new parliament building in the Solomon Islands, an independent country that belongs to the British Commonwealth.
- The \$1 million Federal Highway Administration study to determine why Americans don't ride bi-

## Veterans To Come In From The Cold

Good news for the nation's military veterans. The U.S. House of Representatives has voted to lift the ban on smoking in the nation's 171 Veterans Hospitals.

By a vote of 338 to 71, the House passed a bill that requires the Veterans Administration (VA) to establish either an indoor smoking area or a smoking facility in an adjacent building that has heating and air conditioning.

The House approval of this bill was a rebuff to former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Edward Derwinski, who imposed the smoking ban that forced VA patients to go outdoors to smoke. Banning smoking from the VA facilities was one of Derwinski's top priorities, despite strong opposition from veterans affairs groups nationwide — groups comprised of the individuals whose interest Derwinski represented.

"These veterans went off and fought our wars," said Rep. Sonny Montgomery, D-Miss. "It's just not right to make them go outside to smoke."

The Senate approved the bill in October, and President Bush is expected to sign it into law. □



## Nebraska State Workers Derail Smoking Ban

When 552 state employees sign a petition against a proposed smoking ban, people listen.

Last summer, Larry Primeau, director of the Nebraska Department of Administrative Services proposed banning smoking from all state-owned buildings and vehicles. Primeau's plan would have forced employees and visitors outside to smoke. Further, any employee assigned to a state vehicle would have had to pull off the road and get out of the vehicle just to enjoy a cigarette.

But before implementing this harsh plan, Primeau stated that he was willing to listen to alternatives. He invited interested parties to contact him, and let him know their thoughts about smoking in state-owned buildings and vehicles.

Employees in Lincoln's State Office Building took him at his word, and soon organized a petition drive to inform Primeau of their strong opposition to his plan.

"The general consensus is that [state employees] would like to keep smoking in the designated areas at this time," said Leana Messer, a manager in the office building. "Most of them are smokers, but we do have some non-smokers who believe that smokers have rights too."

"All we're saying is give us our own little room," said another employee who wished to remain anonymous.

Some of the protesting employees also pointed out the inconsistency of prohibiting smoking, while continuing to use cigarette tax revenues to fund the State Office Building.

State Senator Jerome Warner, with whom some of the employees met, agreed. Speaking to the *Lincoln Journal-Star*, Sen. Warner said that because the state relies heavily on the cigarette tax, "we ought to provide places where people can smoke."



**YOU CAN  
MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE**

The strong protest nudged Department Director Primeau towards a compromise policy. Smoking will again be allowed in designated areas of the building's canteen.

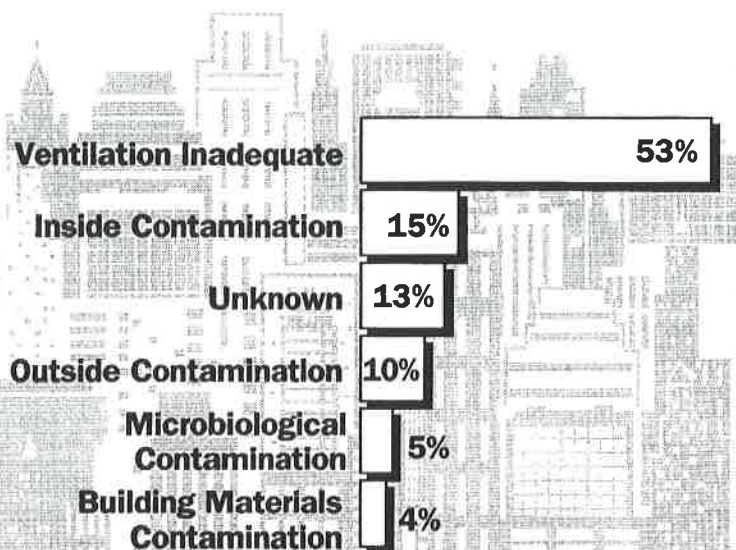
Primeau's compromise was heralded by non-smokers as well as by smokers. "He is looking at setting a fair policy and banning smoking is not a fair policy," said non-smoker Sandy Masek.

Director Primeau conceded that the bulk of comments he received on the issue opposed an outright ban on smoking. "Most people who commented wanted some sort of accommodation," he told the *Journal-Star*.

Primeau is still considering whether or not to proceed with his plan to ban smoking from other state-owned buildings as well as vehicles. Perhaps the strong reaction from employees at the State Office Building will serve as a reminder that smoking bans only serve to lower morale among employees, and create tension between smokers and non-smokers. □

### FASTFACTS

#### Causes of Poor Indoor Air Quality



Source: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health study of 529 buildings



## Dealing With Anti-Smokers In Social Situations: When The Turbulence You Encounter Is Not In The Air...

Your non-smoking domestic flight, scheduled for two hours, has taken five instead.

For five, long, hellish hours you've sat strapped in a metal tube with some of the least appealing and most annoying members of the human race.

Seated next to you was the insurance salesman who would not stop talking. In front of you was the three year-old practicing to be an international terrorist. Across the aisle was the woman with the overpowering perfume that made your throat constrict with every breath. And behind you was the lucky, lucky man who slept peacefully throughout the entire ordeal — and who snored so loudly the plane shuddered.

The food was terrible, the coffee undrinkable and there was no movie.

And no smoking.

Finally, you get off the plane at your destination, relieved that the whole experience is now nothing but an unpleasant memory. Blissfully, you light your first cigarette in five hours.

Next thing you know, you're being whacked with a rolled up People magazine by the Perfume Lady from the plane.

"Put that \$&@\$ cigarette out," she shrieks, "this is a

non-smoking airport!"

What do you do? Do you tell the woman she has no right to complain about your smoking when she smells as offensive as she does? Do you scream, "Lady, I had to put up with you and all the other inconsiderate people on that flight for five hours you can darn well put up with my cigarette smoke for five minutes!?" Or do you push her onto the nearest luggage carousel, quickly and silently, while no one is looking?

The correct response is to put the cigarette out and say "I'm sorry, I didn't know." Then leave the scene to find someplace — a restaurant, a bar or the great outdoors — where you can light up legally in peace.

Then, after you've returned home, you might want to write a letter to the management of the airport. Tell them that you are a smoker who supports

the airport with your travel and tax dollars. Remind them that approximately one-third of the adult, traveling public smokes, and that it would be both appropriate and good policy to accommodate all travelers using the airport.

You might even want to mention The Accommodation Program, which encourages businesses that cater to the general public to establish designated areas for non-smoking and smoking patrons. You can point out that the program has been adopted by T.F. Greene Airport in Providence, RI, and will be implemented in November. [Information about The Accommodation Program is available through Smokers' Advocate.]

If you do not get a response, or if the airport remains non-smoking, you might want to avoid that airport, if possible, when making future travel plans. Drop a second note to the airport's management telling them that you will no longer use their facility. Send a copy to the Federal Aviation Administration in Washington, D.C.

The important thing is to stand up for your rights as a smoker while obeying the rules of both the law and common courtesy.

Just because you can't object to smoking restrictions while in the air, doesn't mean you can't stir up a little dust when you're back on the ground. □



## The Anti-Smoker "Bah Humbug" List

Earlier this year Smokers' Advocate, inspired by David Letterman's "Top Ten" lists, brought you a lighthearted look at the anti-smoking movement called "*The Top Ten Reasons Why Anti-Smokers Do What They Do.*" That article was so well received, that we put together the following top ten reasons why anti-smokers don't like the holiday season.

10. They always receive the same no-smoking paraphernalia that they give as gifts.
9. Frantic holiday shopping leaves no time for anti-smoking crusading.
8. Can't get much attention with Scrooge hogging the limelight.
7. The pretense of tolerance and good will toward mankind is too hard to sustain.
6. Cookies, fruitcake and candy canes just not healthy for the public.
5. Smoking still allowed on Santa's sleigh.
4. It is tiring to give so many lectures against smoke emitted by Yule logs and Hanukkah candles.
3. Outdoor caroling potentially dangerous. Looks too much like cigarette smoke when you can see your breath.

2. Pouring eggnog over the head of a party guest enjoying a cigarette is not acceptable holiday behavior.

And the Number One reason why anti-smokers don't like the holidays:

People are just too cheerful. □



National Edition

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