

Comprehensive Clean Indoor Air Legislation Talking Points

Pennsylvania's current clean indoor air legislation has several exemptions that allow workers and patrons to be exposed to secondhand smoke in 1,353 venues across the state. These exemptions include:

- Bars, with 20 percent or less revenue from food sales
- Casinos (up to 50 percent of the gaming floor)
- Private Clubs
- Tobacco Shops
- Cigar Bars
- Truck stops with shower facilities

E-cigarettes are not included under Pennsylvania's Clean Indoor Air Act, leaving workers and patrons exposed to secondhand emissions.

Comprehensive clean indoor air legislation would prohibit smoking in all indoor workplaces and public places, with no exceptions. A comprehensive clean indoor air law would protect all workers and the public from the harms of secondhand smoke exposure and would provide a level playing field for all businesses across the Commonwealth.

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed an increased attention on lung health; smoking increases the risks of the most severe impacts of COVID-19.

All workers deserve to be protected from the harmful pollutants, including carcinogens, of secondhand smoke exposure. Unfortunately, Pennsylvania's law still leaves many workers in the hospitality industry exposed. Only by enacting comprehensive clean indoor air legislation can we give all Pennsylvania workers the protection they deserve. Here's why comprehensive clean indoor air legislation matters:

E-CIGARETTES

- Both the U.S. Surgeon General and the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine have warned about the risks of inhaling secondhand e-cigarette emissions, which are created when an e-cigarette user exhales the chemical cocktail created by e-cigarettes.
- According to the 2021 National Youth Tobacco Survey, more than 2 million U.S. middle and high school students are using e-cigarettes. Additionally, more than 8 out of 10 youth e-cigarette users still report use of flavored products.¹
- In 2016, the Surgeon General concluded that secondhand emissions contain, "nicotine; ultrafine particles; flavorings such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to serious lung disease; volatile organic compounds such as benzene, which is found in car exhaust; and heavy metals, such as nickel, tin, and lead"²

THERE IS NO SAFE EXPOSURE

- Although the Pennsylvania Clean Indoor Air Act makes an exception for some workplaces that have separate ventilation systems for smoking and non-smoking sections, The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers have issued this statement: "At present, the only means of effectively eliminating health risks associated with indoor exposure is to ban smoking activity. No other engineering approaches, including current and advanced dilution ventilation or air cleaning technologies, have been demonstrated or should be relied upon to control health risks from environmental tobacco smoke exposure in spaces where smoking occurs."³

¹ National Youth Tobacco Survey, (2021). Fda.gov.

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2016). E-Cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General—Executive Summary.

³ American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (2019). ASHRAE Position Document on Environmental Tobacco Smoke.

- Everyone deserves a smoke free workplace, including casino workers. Pennsylvania is surrounded by states with 100% smoke free gaming facilities. In 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the PA Gaming Control Board re-opened all casinos in Pennsylvania as temporarily smoke free. Since that time, casinos have started to bring smoking back into their facilities, while others have chosen to remain smokefree to protect their employees and customers. Since it is still a critical time for lung health, it's time to keep casinos permanently smoke free.

HEALTH

- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a warning that all people at risk for heart disease should avoid all indoor places that allow smoking because short-term exposure to secondhand smoke creates an increased risk of heart attacks.⁴
- Secondhand smoke is a known cause of lung cancer, heart disease, chronic lung ailments such as bronchitis and asthma (particularly in children), and low birth-weight births.⁵
- More than 34,000 adult nonsmokers die every year in the United States from heart disease and lung cancer caused by exposure to secondhand smoke.⁵
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified smokers as high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Smoking and vaping harm the lungs, leaving lung tissue inflamed, fragile and susceptible to infection. Tobacco use has been proven to harm the immune system and airway lining cells that contain cilia on their surface, which are essential defenders against viruses like COVID-19. Without them working properly, the lungs are more vulnerable. Now more than ever, reducing exposure to respiratory risk factors seems imperative, and we strongly recommend removing secondhand smoke from indoor environments and encourage those who currently smoke to quit.⁶

ECONOMICS

- A study, The Economic Impact of the 2008 Pennsylvania Clean Indoor Air Act (2011), confirmed that there was no evidence of a negative economic impact on Pennsylvania businesses due to the enactment of the Clean Indoor Air law.⁷

DISPARITIES

- Secondhand smoke can trigger asthma episodes and increase the severity of attacks. Secondhand smoke is also a risk factor for new cases of asthma in preschool-aged children. Children's developing bodies make them more susceptible to the effects of secondhand smoke and, due to their small size, they breathe more rapidly than adults, thereby taking in more secondhand smoke.⁸
- More than 1.1 million adults in Pennsylvania have suffered from asthma during their lifetime.⁹

SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT SAVES LIVES

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Secondhand Smoke (SHS) Facts.

⁵ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (2018). Health Harms from Secondhand Smoke.

⁶ American Lung Association on COVID-19 and Protecting Lung Health: Quit Smoking and Vaping.

⁷ <https://www.lung.org/media/press-releases/covid-19-and-protecting-lung-health>

⁸ Tauras, J. A., et. al. (2011). The Economic Impact of the 2008 Pennsylvania Clean Indoor Air Act.

⁹ United States Environmental Protection Agency. Asthma Triggers: Gain Control.

⁹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/most_recent_data_states.htm.

- Current Clean Indoor Air Comprehensive Legislation that is supported by the American Lung Association and its partners includes the following:

SB 124 – Sen. Fontana

HB 211 – Rep. DeLuca

Rep. Frankel will be introducing comprehensive clean indoor air legislation on March 16, 2022

Advocate Ask:

Do you support comprehensive clean indoor air to protect all Pennsylvanians?