

Frequently Asked Questions



Why do we need a SmokeFreeOhio?

Secondhand smoke is more than just an annoyance; it's a serious health hazard that causes heart disease, lung disease and cancer. Secondhand smoke is especially dangerous to kids, the elderly, and people with health problems. Everyone has the right to breathe clean indoor air at work and in public places. For more information on the dangers of secondhand smoke, visit http://smokefreeohio.org/oh/about/documents/SFO_Warning.pdf.

When will SmokeFreeOhio be on the ballot?

SmokeFreeOhio is working to pass a statewide clean indoor air law through a process called an "initiated statute." The campaign submitted more than 100,000 valid signatures of Ohio voters to the Secretary of State's office on November 17, 2005 (the Great American Smokeout). The Secretary of State delivered the signatures and our comprehensive clean indoor air law to the Ohio General Assembly in January of 2006. The legislature had four months to consider the proposal. On May 3, we began a second round of signature gathering. We turned in over 185,000 signatures to the Ohio Secretary of State on July 28. On September 7, the SmokeFreeOhio issue was certified for the November 2006 ballot.

Who is leading SmokeFreeOhio?

The American Cancer Society, Ohio Division, is the lead organization for the SmokeFreeOhio campaign. Their long-standing partners in tobacco control are partnering with them: the American Lung Association, the American Heart Association, the Ohio Hospital Association, and the National Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. In addition, the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners, the Ohio State Medical Association, and hundreds of other businesses and organizations have joined this effort. Thousands of volunteers in Ohio have also supported SmokeFreeOhio by collecting signatures from family, friends, and neighbors, writing letters to the editor, and spreading the word about smoke-free public places in their communities. For a complete list of supporting organizations, visit <http://smokefreeohio.org/oh/about/organizations.aspx>.

What places would be smoke-free under the proposed law?

SmokeFreeOhio is advocating for a 100 percent clean indoor air standard for the state of Ohio. The proposal includes all public places and workplaces in the state. SmokeFreeOhio's statewide law will not weaken any clean indoor air ordinances that have been adopted at the local level in Ohio communities. It does not prevent people from smoking outside, in their homes, or cars.

What is the difference between the SmokeFreeOhio law and the pro-smoking constitutional amendment?

The Ohio Licensed Beverage Association and R.J. Reynolds Tobacco are leading a campaign to put a constitutional amendment on the ballot in November of 2006. Their pro-smoking amendment would allow smoking in most public places including places frequented by children, like restaurants and bowling alleys. In addition, smoking could also be allowed in businesses like offices and factories, where minors are not permitted. It would also overturn the smoke-free public places laws passed in 21 Ohio cities, and would prevent communities from ever protecting everyone's right to breathe clean indoor air. The tobacco and alcohol industries want to make it unconstitutional to protect the health of the hundreds of thousands of hospitality workers in Ohio and the millions of patrons that visit these establishments.

Voters asked to sign a petition for smoke-free public places should ask to see the first page of the petition. If the first page is entitled, "The Smoke Free Workplace Act," the petition is for SmokeFreeOhio's reasonable smoke-free public places law. If the petition refers to an amendment, it is for the pro-smoking constitutional amendment supported by the tobacco and alcohol industries.

Is SmokeFreeOhio an attempt at prohibition of smoking or discrimination against smokers?

No, SmokeFreeOhio does not make smoking illegal or keep anyone, including smokers, from visiting and enjoying public places. It just asks smokers in public places to step outside for a few minutes to smoke. It protects the right of all Ohioans to breathe clean indoor air in public places. For more information on myths related to smoke-free workplaces, visit http://smokefreeohio.org/oh/about/documents/SFO_TenMyths.pdf.

Will this law hurt businesses in Ohio?

Economic impact studies from around the country show that clean indoor air laws do not hurt business, including the restaurant and bar industry. A study of bars and restaurants in Toledo, Ohio, showed that Toledo's clean indoor air law did not harm businesses. Economic impact studies of statewide laws in Massachusetts, Florida, Delaware, and California have all shown that businesses are not harmed. A recent Surgeon General's report verified that smoke-free public places laws do not have a negative economic impact on businesses. For more information on economic impact, visit http://smokefreeohio.org/oh/about/documents/SFO_EconomicImpact.pdf.

Shouldn't business owners be able to use their property without restrictions?

Not when it puts the health of workers or the public at risk. Just as businesses are required to serve unspoiled food and to provide clean water, so should they be required to provide clean air. Businesses are currently required to keep kitchens clean, cook food to appropriate temperatures, and have workers wash their hands before serving food to prevent the spread of disease. Lung cancer and heart disease caused by secondhand smoke kill just as surely as salmonella. A clean indoor air law is another commonsense health protection law.

How will the law be enforced and will it be difficult to enforce?

The law will be enforced by the Ohio Department of Health. Clean indoor air laws are extremely popular and supported by the vast majority of people. Experience shows that compliance rates are high and enforcement is not time-consuming. New York City's law had a 97% compliance rate after one year. In Ireland, the compliance rate was 97% after just two months. For more information on enforcement and compliance, visit http://smokefreeohio.org/oh/about/documents/SFO_ComplianceEnforcement.pdf.

Can't ventilation systems take care of the problem?

Unfortunately, no ventilation system exists that can remove all of the toxins found in secondhand smoke, as even tobacco companies and ventilation engineers agree. Therefore, no ventilation system can protect workers and patrons from the health hazards of secondhand smoke. For more information on ventilation, visit http://smokefreeohio.org/oh/about/documents/SFO_Ventilation.pdf.

What Ohio cities are smoke-free?

Right now, 21 Ohio cities have passed smoke-free laws:

- Bexley
- Bowling Green
- Centerville
- Columbus
- Granville
- New Albany
- Dublin
- Grove City
- Newark
- Fairfield
- Heath
- Powell
- Gahanna
- Hilliard
- Toledo
- Grandview Heights
- Marble Cliff
- Upper Arlington
- Wauseon
- Westerville
- Worthington

What states are smoke-free?

Fourteen states have passed strong smoke-free laws, including: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Montana, Utah, Vermont, and Washington. In addition, Idaho, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Florida have laws that cover most public places. Many countries, including Ireland and Italy, are also smoke-free.

Who else has endorsed SmokeFreeOhio?

Campaign now has hundreds of endorsers, including the Ohio Academy of Family Physicians, the Ohio Asthma Coalition, Ohio Association of Free Clinics, Ohio Association of School Nurses, Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Ohio Education Association, Ohio Nurses Association, Ohio Osteopathic Association, Ohio PTA, Ohio Sickle Cell and Health Association, the Ohio United Way, Grange Insurance, the Thomas & King Applebee's franchises, the Ohio Chapter of the American College of Surgeons, and many others. In addition, the Columbus *Dispatch*, Toledo *Blade*, Marietta *Times*, Zanesville *Times Recorder*, Newark *Advocate*, Chillicothe *Gazette*, Coshocton *Tribune*, Lancaster *Eagle-Gazette*, Akron *Beacon Journal*, Willoughby *News Herald*, Port Clinton *News Herald*, Fremont *News Messenger*, and Columbus *Business First* have all editorialized in favor of SmokeFreeOhio.

SmokeFreeOhio is a campaign by the American Cancer Society in collaboration with the American Heart Association, American Lung Association, the Ohio Health Commissioners Association, the Ohio Hospital Association, the Ohio State

Medical Association, the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, and other supporting organizations to create smoke-free public places and workplaces in the state of Ohio. Because secondhand smoke causes cancer, heart disease, and lung diseases, we believe that everyone has the right to breathe clean indoor air, free of secondhand smoke, in public places and workplaces.

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