

STATE SENATOR • RAYMOND E. BASHAM • 8TH DISTRICT

# Basham Press Release

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## **Basham Expresses Extreme Disappointment and Frustration Over Failure on Smokefree Workplaces**

*Conference Committee fails to reach compromise, sends issue back to square one next session*

LANSING, Mich.-After ten years of tireless advocacy for smokefree workplaces in Michigan, Senator Ray Basham (D-Taylor) will have to wait yet again to see his dream realized as the six person, bicameral conference committee failed to reach a compromise on legislation today. The 2007-2008 legislative year saw more major milestones for smokefree workplaces than ever before-culminating in the passage of bills by both the State House and Senate-yet it comes to a close with no bills reaching final passage, resetting the issue and the process to start all over again in the new year.

“I am absolutely crestfallen over this, as close as we came to seeing this effort through only to come up empty-handed, it’s very difficult,” said Sen. Basham. “But I haven’t given up hope over the last ten years, and I don’t plan to start now. Going into year eleven, this will remain my top priority, and I don’t care whose name is on the bills as long as this issue gets some traction.”

In the last few months, the House and Senate both passed versions of smokefree workplace legislation, differing only on the scope of the bills, with the House moving to exempt casinos, cigar bars and bingo halls. The bill was sent to conference committee earlier in December, and Sen. Basham was named as a conferee along with Senators Alan Cropsey (R-DeWitt) and Alan Sanborn (R-Richmond) and Representatives Brenda Clack (D-Flint), Andy Meisner (D-Ferndale) and Dave Hildenbrand (R-Lowell). Multiple compromise proposals were brought to the table that had the potential to bridge the differences on both sides of the issue, but they never made it past the committee.

“This is certainly a setback, but not a defeat,” Basham said. “I will keep pushing for the health of all men, women and children in this state, and if the Legislature won’t take action on behalf of the people, I’ll see to it that we put this issue on the ballot and before the voters. I know I will see smokefree air for all Michigan workers some day, it’s just too bad it won’t be today.”

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