

STATE SENATOR • RAYMOND E. BASHAM • 8TH DISTRICT

Basham Press Release

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Basham Continues Fight for All Michigan Workers, Calls for End to Exemptions in Smokefree Workplace Legislation

Bill passed out of House committee still puts casinos and cigar bars before employee and patron health

LANSING, Mich.-Senator Ray Basham (D-Taylor) called on the Legislature to pass comprehensive smokefree workplace legislation in light of the House Regulatory Reform Committee's passage of HB 4377 today. The bill would make some Michigan workplaces smokefree while exempting casinos and tobacco bars, with other exemptions yet to come, leaving thousands of Michigan employees still at high-risk for cancer, emphysema and other illnesses related to secondhand smoke exposure.

"By passing this bill with these exemptions today, legislators are once again stacking the deck in favor of special interests and forcing more than 10,000 casino employees to play the odds between cancer and a paycheck," said Sen. Basham, who has been fighting to make Michigan workplaces smokefree for more than ten years. "The movement of this legislation today gets the ball rolling, but in our current economy, we shouldn't be forcing Michigan workers to choose between their job and their health, regardless of where they work."

Recent studies show that nearly 2/3 of Michigan voters support a workplace ban that includes bars and restaurants. Unfortunately, Michigan remains one of the 13 states left that has yet to pass legislation to create smokefree workplaces. Thirty-seven states have already passed similar legislation to protect their workers from deadly exposure to secondhand smoke, including Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Last week North Carolina, the largest tobacco producing state in the country, passed a statewide smoking ban.

"I will continue to advocate for the passage of legislation that would make all Michigan workplaces smokefree," said Sen. Basham. "The people of Michigan overwhelmingly want this to happen, and if the Legislature can't reach a solution soon, then I will work to put the smokefree workplace issue on the ballot so Michigan citizens can decide on this for themselves."

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