

NEWS ♦ NEWS ♦ NEWS ♦ NEWS ♦ NEWS



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Governor's Press Office ♦ Room 308, Main Capitol Building ♦ Harrisburg, PA 17120 ♦ 717-783-1116 (Phone) ♦ 717-772-8462 (Fax)

EDWARD G. RENDELL, Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 13, 2008

CONTACT:

Chuck Ardo
717-783-1116

GOVERNOR RENDELL SIGNS BILL RESTRICTING SMOKING IN MOST PUBLIC PLACES IN PENNSYLVANIA

RELEVANT AREAS TO BE SMOKE-FREE IN 90 DAYS

HARRISBURG – Governor Edward G. Rendell today signed into law the Clean Indoor Air Act, which will protect Pennsylvanians from the deadly health effects of secondhand smoke by prohibiting smoking in most public places, including restaurants, workplaces and a portion of casino floors.

“All Pennsylvanians will benefit from the persistence of advocates and legislators who refused to quit working until we had joined dozens of other states in banning smoking in most public places,” Governor Rendell said as he signed the law today in Ambler before an enthusiastic audience including advocates who have worked for years to enact the legislation.

“Smoking and secondhand smoke kills and costs our health care system billions of dollars in Pennsylvania. It only makes sense for us to attack this problem and the public overwhelmingly supports these protections. The members of the conference committee that developed this measure are to be congratulated on achieving a long sought compromise that will benefit the people of the Commonwealth.”

The smoking ban is an initiative from the Governor's Prescription for Pennsylvania, a comprehensive health care reform plan which strives to make health care more affordable and accessible while improving quality.

A 2006 report from the U.S. Surgeon General documented the serious and deadly health effects of secondhand smoke on healthy non-smokers, which include developmental effects in children, heart disease in adults and cancer in sites beyond the lungs.

The legislation, Senate Bill 246, prohibits smoking in a public place or a workplace and lists examples of what is considered a public place. The bill allows for some exceptions, including a private residence (except those licensed as a child-care facility), a private social function where the site involved is under the control of the sponsor (except where the site is owned, leased, or operated by a state or local government agency) and a wholesale or retail tobacco shop. It also imposes

penalties for those establishments not in compliance, as well as those individuals smoking in prohibited areas.

Establishments will have a 90 day phase-in period to allow for necessary changes to come in to compliance with the new law. During this time, the Pennsylvania Department of Health will implement its plans for information, education and awareness to the general public and businesses about the requirements of the new legislation, and provide technical assistance to businesses in the implementation of no smoking policies.

In a signing letter to members of the General Assembly, the Governor noted that he shared the concerns of many citizens and some legislators that an even more comprehensive clean indoor air act can become law. He said he was particularly sympathetic to those citizens in Allegheny County, Scranton and other municipalities and believes it would be right and fair for state law to allow for the preservation of their forward-thinking local ordinances in addition to the ordinance adopted by the City of Philadelphia.

To learn more about this new legislation, visit www.health.state.pa.us, or for help in quitting smoking go to www.determinedtoquit.com or the helpline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). For additional information on the Governor's innovative Prescription for Pennsylvania health care reform plan, please visit www.rxforpa.com.

###

The Rendell administration is committed to creating a first-rate public education system, protecting our most vulnerable citizens and continuing economic investment to support our communities and businesses. To find out more about Governor Rendell's initiatives and to sign up for his weekly newsletter, visit his Web site at: www.governor.state.pa.us.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The text of Governor Rendell's signing letter is below.

To the Honorable General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

Today I signed Senate Bill 246, The Clean Indoor Air Act. This law is an important, long fought and necessary step toward protecting the health of millions of our citizens from the documented dangers of second hand smoke. Pennsylvania has waited too long to join the ranks of the other dozens of states that have enacted indoor smoking bans. The members of the conference committee are to be congratulated on a long sought compromise that is a quality product. Make no mistake, Senate Bill 246 will allow millions of Pennsylvanians the right to breathe easier.

Although I enthusiastically signed this bill, I do share the concerns of many of our citizens, and some legislators, who think we can and should do better. This law was many years in the making and the day will come when an even more comprehensive clean indoor air act will be the law of the land. I am particularly sympathetic to those citizens in Allegheny County, Scranton and other municipalities who led the way on this public health issue, only to have their forward thinking ordinances overturned. It would be right and fair for state law to allow for the preservation of these forward thinking local ordinances in addition to the ordinance adopted by the City of Philadelphia. This issue has not fallen on deaf ears and in signing this bill, I trust the General Assembly will work toward that end.

Edward G. Rendell, Governor