

Action **TAN** Request

Gene Ainsworth

*Rhode Island
Smoking Law*

Tobacco Action Network, 1875 Eye Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006 800-424-9876

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Activities Policy Committee

FROM: Roger L. Mazingo *Roz*

RE: Rhode Island H 5076, "A Bill to Prohibit Smoking in All Public Buildings and Workplaces Except in Specific Areas"

DATE: February 20, 1985

BACKGROUND/LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

H 5076, "A Bill to Prohibit Smoking in All Public Buildings and Workplaces Except in Specific Areas" (Exhibit A) is currently being considered by the House Health, Education and Welfare Committee (Exhibit B-1) of the Rhode Island Legislature.

A hearing was held before the Committee on Wednesday, February 13. The Tobacco Institute and its wholesaler allies presented testimony in opposition to the legislation. Members of the state's labor and business communities filed in opposition and will actively lobby, but preferred to stay out of the spotlight. No vote was taken; and it is likely that the Committee will hold the legislation for review and action at a later time. The intent of our action is to keep the legislation held in Committee. If the legislation moves out of Committee and through the House, it will be reviewed by the Senate Health, Education and Welfare Committee (Exhibit B-2) before going to the Senate floor.

In the past the legislature has enacted restrictions on smoking in restaurants and has considered similar workplace restrictions. During the 1984 Session, a bill requiring restaurants to post signs informing people of the availability of nonsmoking sections was passed; and a similar piece of workplace legislation was considered and rejected.

PLAN OF ACTION

Direct Lobbying

Legislative counsel has arranged a series of one-on-one meetings with members of the Health, Education and Welfare Committee. Additional meetings are also being conducted with legislative leaders in both parties in both houses. At this point, the Speaker has indicated that this is "not a priority" for the legislature. However, this may change.

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Legislative Support

Efforts have already been implemented to develop the support of various organizations to help defeat the legislation. Members of this coalition include the various wholesalers in the state, the Rhode Island Hospitality Association, the Rhode Island State Chamber of Commerce, and the Rhode Island State Council AFL-CIO. Each of these organizations has agreed to lobby and mobilize its members in opposition to the legislation. However, there is little enthusiasm for the effort. If the legislation proceeds beyond the House Health, Education and Welfare Committee, an advertising program, public relations campaign, voter survey, and economic survey are being considered for the State of Rhode Island.

ACTION REQUESTED

At this time, we request permission to ask member company TAN activists to participate in the following activities as required by the movement of the legislation:

1. Write immediately to the Chairman of the House Health, Education and Welfare Committee. Attached is the letter (Exhibit C) to TAN activists and a list of suggested points that the volunteers can make in their correspondence (Exhibit D).
2. Write immediately to the Speaker of the House and the Senate Majority Leader at the following addresses:

The Honorable Matthew J. Smith
Speaker of the House
86 Pontiac Avenue
Providence, RI 02907

The Honorable John C. Revens, Jr.
Senate Majority Leader
Room 318
State House
Providence, RI 02903

If the legislation proceeds beyond the Health, Education and Welfare Committee:

3. Write to members of the Rhode Island House of Representatives (Exhibit E). The letter requesting this action would be similar to that in Number 1 above; and the suggested points would be the same.
4. Participate in a telephone bank effort to encourage other TAN members and members of the business community to actively oppose the legislation. This activity will take place after normal business hours.

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5. Participate in a "letter-to-the-editor" campaign in selected media markets.
6. Participate in "meet your legislator" programs in selected areas. If necessary, such gatherings would occur, with your permission, during normal business hours. However, every effort would be made to have these sessions after normal business hours.
7. Participate in a flyer distribution program to retail outlets throughout the state.
8. Participate in a petition drive.

If this legislation should proceed from the House to the Senate, we would request the following:

9. Participation by all activists in activities similar to those listed above with the members of the Senate Health, Education and Welfare Committee and then the members of the Rhode Island Senate (Exhibit F).

The above activities will be implemented as necessary, based on movement of the legislation and the guidance of local counsel. Approval for these activities is requested now to eliminate delays during the session.

We also request that you assist our local legislative effort by contacting your subsidiaries, suppliers, and advertisers within the State of Rhode Island to secure their early opposition to this legislation. The efforts of these people would be especially helpful with members of the Health, Education, and Welfare Committee and the legislative leadership.

Legislative counsel and Covington and Burling have reviewed the lobbying laws of the State of Rhode Island and have determined that the actions requested do not require the participants to register as legislative agents/lobbyists.

Please contact Bill Cannell with your approval of the requested action and your recommendations for additional activities.

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Enclosures

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