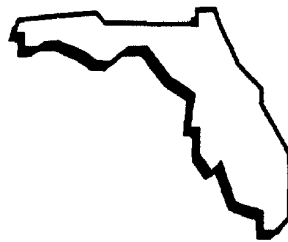


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FLORIDA SMOKERS' RIGHTS

JULY

STATEWIDE NEWSLETTER

1991

STATEWIDE NEWSLETTER

With this copy, you are receiving the first edition of the Florida Smokers' Rights Newsletter. This is published to keep you up to date on the events affecting smokers in the Sunshine State. Let us know what you think by writing:

Florida Smokers' Rights
P.O. Box 10444
Tallahassee, FL 32302

FLORIDA SMOKERS' RIGHTS GROUPS

- Bradenton
- Brandon
- Fort Lauderdale
- Fort Myers
- Gainesville
- Hollywood
- Jacksonville
- Lake City
- Miami
- Ocala
- Orlando
- Pensacola
- Port St. Joe
- Sarasota
- St. Petersburg
- Tallahassee
- Tampa
- West Palm Beach

SMOKERS SCORE MAJOR VICTORY

In the closing hours of the 1991 Florida legislative session, Florida smokers scored a decisive victory. A bill that would have imposed many new smoking restrictions died in the Senate, but the anti-smokers are already hard at work to revive the bill for 1992.

Thanks to your hard work — calling, writing, and visiting your legislators — smokers managed to defeat some very severe restrictions on our right to choose where and when we can smoke. Without your efforts this bill would have passed.

Before the bill was killed, an amendment was added that would have protected smokers from job discrimination for their off-the-job activities. Smokers' rights have become so severely threatened that some employers have gone as far as testing for nicotine to screen potential job applicants or current employees. The so-called "smokers' rights" amendment would protect employees from employers who want to regulate (or prohibit) their smoking at home, in their car or away from the job site.

The Senate sponsor of the anti-smoking bill, Sen. Jeanne Malchon (D-St. Petersburg), refused to accept even that accommodation, so she didn't support the bill in the end.

But the credit for the bill's defeat goes to the hard work Florida smokers put in. It made a big difference when you told your Senators and Representatives that you oppose unfair restrictions.

The job isn't finished, though. Reps. Elaine Bloom (D-Miami Beach) and Lois Frankel (D-West Palm Beach) have already filed a restrictions bill that will be considered when the Legislature convenes in January of 1992. The new bill calls for essentially the same restrictions as the 1991 proposal. The bill does not contain the "smokers' rights amendment." The proposed bill would:

- Ban smoking in all educational facilities (including college campuses and teachers' lounges).
- Encourage officials to ban smoking in all government buildings.
- Ban smoking in common areas, which are defined as "any public place."
- Ban smoking in shopping malls.
- Mandate that private restaurant owners provide at least 35% of their seating for non-smoking sections.
- Ban designated smoking areas in all hospitals, and

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ban smoking in all areas of hospitals (except if a doctor directs the staff to allow a patient to smoke in his/her room).

These bans go beyond fair and reasonable accommodation and even intrude into private business decisions. And yet the goal of House and Senate sponsors of the 1992 anti-smoking bill is to sign up enough cosponsors to ensure passage before hearings are even held.

We will need to make our game plan now and we will have to fight even harder than we did last year if we hope to defeat these proposals.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

There are a number of things we can do. Fortunately, the Legislature doesn't begin again until January, so we have some time to make plans and take action. But we must begin today if we are to have an impact.

- **FIRST**, we can conduct a petition drive. Our goal is to gather more than 25,000 signatures during the next six months. We've included petition forms to get you started. Drop us a note and we'll send you as many additional petition forms as

you need. Be sure to send us your completed petitions as soon as you collect the signatures!

- **SECOND**, each of you can call your Senator and Representative and schedule a meeting to sit down with them personally. Summer is an excellent time because they're not in session and are back at home.
- **THIRD**, get together with other group members (join a group, or start a new one of your own, if you're not already involved). Plan your group's strategy around your own members' contacts and interests for the next few months.
- **FOURTH**, let us know how you are doing!
 - * We'd like to know how your visit goes with your legislators.
 - * If you're interested, we'd like to help you start a new group, recruit more members, or get in touch with other group leaders to share ideas.

Together, we can make a difference in 1992. There is power in numbers!

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE....

- Learn about the St. Pete group's plans for a statewide Smokers' Rights rally in September.
- Read how the group in Ocala is working to overturn a smoking ban in their county courthouse.
- Find out how the Orlando group is taking the Smokers' Rights message to VFW and American Legion Posts.
- Find out how the Fort Myers group launched its petition drive to oppose taxes and restrictions in the upcoming legislative session.
- Learn how the group in Jacksonville is working with the Duval County Teachers Union to preserve designated smoking areas in teachers' lounges.

Drop us a line and let us know what your group has been doing so that we may include that information in the next issue of Florida Smokers' Rights.