

New York Assembly Defeats Bill to Prohibit Smoking in Public Places

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ALBANY, May 3—The Assembly today defeated a controversial bill that would prohibit smoking in public places except in specified smoking areas, but its principal sponsor said he would amend it to limit its scope, and hoped to bring the revised proposal to the Assembly floor before the end of this year's legislative session.

The bill was defeated, 73-to-55, after a spirited debate over the conflicting interests of smokers, nonsmokers, restaurants and the tobacco industry.

"The cigarette interests have got these people so riled up," said the sponsor, Assemblyman Alexander B. Granits, Democrat-Liberal of Manhattan. Mr. Granits said he would amend the bill to exclude some restaurants and smaller workplaces.

Assemblymen did not mince words in defending what they said were the rights of smokers in today's debate.

Restrictions Assailed
"Ridiculous restrictions," thundered Assemblyman Charles D. Hendatson, Republican-Conservative of Hornell. "A horror," cried Andrew W. Ryan,

Republican-Conservative of Plattsburgh.

"This is an anti-labor bill," complained Assemblyman Christopher J. Kege, Republican-Conservative of Brooklyn, arguing that if the bill passed, he would have to dismiss his chain-smoking secretary.

Mr. Granits argued unsuccessfully that his proposal was milder than many that had been adopted elsewhere, and that the bill would leave plenty of room for smokers.

The legislation would have required that every public place—defined in the bill as "any indoor area used by the general public"—set aside designated smoking areas and bar smoking everywhere else.

The bill would have affected, among other areas, workplaces, restaurants, stores, public transit, hotels, motels, colleges, libraries, hospitals and museums. Excluded from the bill were bars, restaurants with 21 tables or less and rooms used during catered banquets.

Mr. Granits said restaurant proprietors would be free under his bill "to designate as large an area as he wants" for use by smokers.

"The purpose of this bill is to reverse the presumption," said Mr. Granits. He noted that areas are now reserved for non-smokers and argued that since three-quarters of the population did not smoke,

the special areas should be reserved for smokers, not "the non-smoking majority."

Supporters of the bill were bolstered when they beat back a Republican amendment that would have excluded restaurants, hotels and motels. But many Democrats who opposed the amendment for partisan reasons then turned around and opposed the bill itself.

Other developments in the capital included:

BILLBOARDS AND TOURISM

The Senate passed a resolution calling on Congress to prevent the Federal Highway Administration from removing 3,800 billboards near major highways across the state.

At a news conference, Senators W. T. Smith of Big Flats and John D. Caemmerer of East Williston, both Republicans, said the program threatened the state's \$4 billion tourism industry because it would remove directional advertising signs used by many hotels, restaurants and other retail establishments to direct travelers to their businesses.

ANTI-CRIME

The Federal Government is withholding \$33 million in highway aid funds until the State Department of Transportation removes the signs, which it calls "illegal" and an ugly nuisance.

In answer to Governor Casey's comprehensive anticrime package, Senate Republicans passed two anticrime measures. One would establish restrictions on plea-bargaining and mandatory sentencing for certain crimes, and set up the new crime categories of "violent felony" and "armed felony."

Under the second bill, juveniles who committed murder, kidnapping, arson in the first degree or an aggravated felony would be held criminally responsible for their actions. The bill would set up a special juvenile-sentencing structure and would provide for mandatory incarceration in a special juvenile correctional facility.

PUSH ONTAYLOR LAW

Leaders of the major state and New York City public employee unions spent lobbied with legislative leaders for a relaxation of the strike penalties in the Taylor Law. Despite their efforts, it was uncertain whether the Legislature would go along. The leaders made public a poll sponsored by the Civil Service Employees Association saying that voters favored the right of public workers to strike by 51 percent to 43 percent, and that 25 percent of the 1,000 respondents thought the anti-strike penalties were "too strict."