

PRO-ACTIVE PROPOSAL

ALABAMA  
HIRING DISCRIMINATION  
SICUT  
LOCAL

OBJECTIVE

Establish smokers' rights in public/private places and in the workplace. Stop hiring/promotion discrimination. Preempt local governments' ability to impose restrictive smoking ordinances.

BACKGROUND

Anti-tobacco activists continue to gain strength in the state legislature and have successfully passed local smoking restrictions in several major cities. The current/emerging legislative leadership is growing weary of defending our point of view. Several businesses are discriminating against smokers.

GENERAL STRATEGY

- o Select key sponsor or sponsors for introduction and control of proposed legislation which will promote smokers' rights and preempt local governments' authority to impose restrictions greater than those set by the state.
- o Contact leadership to determine its support if this effort is made.
- o Establishment of a realistic and practical time line for movement of the bill prior to introduction is under review, as is development of a controlled hearing scenario.
- o We are exploring the pros/cons of a search to find smokers whose rights have been abused and persuade them to testify before legislative committees. The downside is that anti-tobacco elements can easily find anecdotal evidence to support their views.
- o Use expert ETS and IAQ witnesses to brief lawmakers, allies and the media. Development of favorable op-ed pieces from these experts, and from local experts is planned.
- o We are working to develop a coalition with business and labor groups, using "Smoking in the Workplace" seminars to build support from the membership of those groups.

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- o Develop, with member company assistance, grassroots mail program to focus on specific legislators' home districts. Schedule these grassroots efforts and seminars to coincide with the movement of the legislation.
- o We would expect tough amendments in the Senate to any bill we passed in the House. Several members of the Senate leadership have strong anti-tobacco feelings. The eventual bill could be tougher on smokers than what we could support.

RESOURCE NEEDS

- o Identify smokers whose rights have been abused prior to the beginning of the legislative session. Mobilize those smokers for testimony before committees.
- o ETS and IAQ expert witnesses.
- o Back-up counsel to strengthen coalition effort and relationships with ethnic caucus.
- o "Smoking in the Workplace" seminars by Institute identified experts.
- o Develop and coordinate grassroots mail program.

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