

January 11, 1991

TO: Tom C. Griscom

FROM: Tom L. Ogburn, Jr.

SUBJECT: Public Issues Weekly Update January 7 - 11, 1991

Following are highlights of Public Issues activities for the week of January 7 - 11, 1991.

New Jersey Employment Discrimination Bill -- Bill Lear, co-chairman of the New Jersey Coalition of Smokers' Rights Groups, appeared on WOR-TV's talk-TV debate show yesterday morning. This media opportunity came via the show's producers contacting Philip Morris...and then PM contacting us to get names of smokers' rights group spokesmen. The smokers apparently did extremely well and 17 smokers packed the audience. The anti's spokesperson, GASPer Reginia Carlson, normally controlled and articulate, stumbled all over herself, with smoker Bill Lear and our ally ACLU's Ed Martone, catching her in numerous contradictions. The show's phone-in poll results were 74% with us, saying employers should not be allowed to discriminate, with just 26% against us. On a related matter, we've learned that the New York Times will be running a story on the employment discrimination bill in this Sunday's New Jersey section. The reporter has talked to a number of our smoker activists. The bad news is that Field Coordinator Gregg Rackin heard from Philip Morris' state government relations that Times reporter Jay Romano now has been focusing on how Philip Morris has lobbied and pushed, supposedly through campaign contributions to the bill's sponsors, for this legislation from the start. It now looks like the piece may not be favorable.

Denver, Colorado -- The on-again, off-again ban on smoking at Denver's Stapleton International Airport is now on again. The ban, which is the result of an executive order issued by Mayor Pena in October, technically went into effect on January 1. However, at the Denver City Council's meeting on January 2, the council voted 12-1 to rescind the mayor's executive order. This week, Mayor Pena vetoed the council's action.

On Friday, January 11, Public Issues began executing a telephone bank to smokers in seven targeted city council districts to ask them to contact those members of the council and urge them to override the mayor's veto. The phone bank will continue throughout the weekend and into the day on Monday, January 14, the date of the city council's next scheduled meeting. Local Smokers' Rights Groups throughout Colorado, but especially those in the Denver metro area, have been activated. They will make calls to city council members and show up en masse at the Monday night meeting. PM is also executing a phone bank to smokers on its database.

A two-thirds majority vote is required to override the mayor's veto, and, by law, if the override vote is taken and fails, the issue can not be considered again. Therefore, RJR State Government Relations is monitoring this issue closely to determine if we're ready to call for the override vote next Monday night.

Charlotte Voluntary Restaurant Smoking Policy -- The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Restaurant Association (CMRA) is completing a draft of a voluntary policy to present to the city council's "No Smoking Task Force" (NSTF). The recommended plan will be completed by January 18 in plenty of time to meet the February 1, 1991 deadline. A joint CMRA-NSTF recommendation to city council is planned for March 4, 1991. CMRA will suggest a joint press release and program fact sheet to the NSTF to accompany the presentation to city council. The CMRA plans to leverage a likely NSTF request for a minimum percentage of restaurant participation (about 65%) against a request for additional funding from government to implement the plan.

Arlington, Texas -- The anti-smoking forces in Arlington, Texas are trying to strengthen the existing smoking restriction ordinance in that city. Our Field Coordinator met with the local group on Monday night to prepare them for a Tuesday night meeting of the City Council's Health Committee. Members of the local group attended the public hearing, where they spoke in opposition to harsher restrictions and presented petition signatures to the committee. In the upcoming weeks, the Health Committee will recommend what actions, if any, they feel should be taken to the full City Council.

Spokane County, Wash. Minor's Tobacco Control Regulations -- RJR's Spokane Sales Division Manager is leading a trade coalition which will present a voluntary program to control cigarette sales to minors. The plan, based on Tobacco Institute's model program, will be presented to the Spokane County Board of Health on January 17 as an alternative to a board plan which will regulate and restrict retail sales. Two local health officials who have been advising the trade coalition are impressed with the plan and will recommend the health board adopt it.

Bellflower, California -- 300 telephone calls are being made this week into Bellflower, California, and a Rapid Deployment smokers' rights meeting will be held Saturday -- all in advance of next Monday night's Bellflower City Council hearing. City Council members of this predominantly Black, Los Angeles County suburb are considering an ordinance that would totally ban smoking in all city restaurants. The first vote taken last month went 5-0 against smokers. Smokers are being encouraged to call City Council members, attend the smokers' meeting, and speak out at the Monday Council hearing.

Greensboro Restaurant Smoking Restrictions -- The Greensboro City Council will meet January 22 to either overturn the 25% minimum non smoking areas regulation in restaurants or, more likely, to put the issue on a ballot to be decided by voters. A vote could occur in late February. Public Issues is prepared to get out the vote in the case of a special election.

Des Moines City Council -- A Des Moines, Iowa city employee, Dante Vignaroli, is trying to modify the city's smoking ban in city-owned buildings by requesting and receiving time to speak before the City Council at its Jan. 28 meeting. In support, Public Issues field staff is helping the employee prepare his remarks as well as assist in a local petition drive and -- via the RJR employee phone bank - - in contacting other smokers in the area to get smokers to attend the hearing.

Volunteer Action Center -- The Action Center opened for the new year this week and is working on a project in Iowa. The volunteers are calling smokers in the Des Moines area to generate calls to the governor's office in opposition to his public statements re an increase in the state excise tax on cigarettes.

However, as it now appears that Governor Branstad may try to push an increase through the legislature this month, we will transfer the project to the MARC communication center. They will contact smokers across the state to generate calls to state senators/representatives.

A Jim Johnston letter to all RJRT employees goes out this week to further publicize the Action Center program. It is accompanied by a Q&A brochure and three sign-up cards. (Samples attached.)

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