



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Feb. 18, 2009

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Campaign for Smokefree Air Reignites Legislative Effort To Make all Workplaces Smokefree

LANSING, Mich. – The battle for smokefree air continued today as Rep. Joan Bauer (D-Lansing) introduced House Bill 4341, an effort to make all workplaces in Michigan smokefree.

The Campaign for Smokefree Air supports Bauer's bill, which would protect all Michigan workers from secondhand smoke exposure, including those at restaurants, bars and the three Detroit casinos. Bauer also is a leader in the newly formed Smokefree Air Caucus, a bipartisan, bicameral organization asking lawmakers to sign a pledge to work on smokefree legislation during this term.

"Michigan workers have waited long enough," said Susan Schechter, CSA spokesperson and director of advocacy at the American Lung Association of Michigan. "We made progress last year, but not enough. It is time for measures such as Rep. Bauer's bill to be passed and signed into law. Protecting the health of all workers needs to be a priority in the legislature."

Smokefree legislation has received a groundswell of support lately, including in Gov. Granholm's State of the State speech on Feb. 4 and from lawmakers who heard from constituents during the November 2008 election that this was an important issue to be resolved. Bauer is dedicated to the passing of smokefree legislation and hopes her fellow lawmakers will focus on the health of Michigan residents this term.

"Protecting all workers from inhaling secondhand smoke in order to bring home a paycheck is the priority here," Bauer said. "No one should have to choose between their health and their job. As many as 2,400 Michigan residents die each year from secondhand smoke exposure. It is time for us to do our part in the legislature and protect our constituents."

Polling sponsored by CSA in April 2005 and January 2008 consistently showed overwhelming support for smokefree workplaces across Michigan. In 2006, the U.S. Surgeon General released a report concluding that the only way to protect workers and residents from deadly secondhand smoke exposure is through comprehensive smokefree air laws. Currently, more than 30 states have adopted protective smokefree air laws.

About CSA

The Campaign for Smokefree Air is a grassroots coalition with more than 270 members, including leadership from the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association of Michigan, Michigan Health & Hospital Association, and Michigan State Medical Society, as well as other statewide groups that are committed to passing a smokefree workplace law. For more information about the Campaign for Smokefree Air, please visit www.MakeMIAirSmokefree.org.

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