



**For Immediate Release**

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## **NEW STATEWIDE INDIANA POLL FINDS STRONG AND GROWING VOTER SUPPORT FOR SMOKEFREE WORKPLACES**

*Strong majority of voters want the right to breathe clean air  
inside all workplaces, including restaurants, bars and casinos*

**Support for a statewide law is strong among Republicans, Democrats and Independents  
and in every region of the state**

**Indianapolis, Feb. 10 2009** ó A poll conducted at the end of January and released today finds that voters in every region of the state and across political party lines strongly support a statewide law prohibiting smoking inside all workplaces, including restaurants, bars and casinos.

By a nearly two-to-one-margin (64 percent to 34 percent), Hoosier voters support a law prohibiting smoking in indoor public places, including workplaces, public buildings, offices, casinos, restaurants and bars. Nearly half of all voters (49 percent) *strongly* favor such a law. Support for a smokefree workplace law is up five percentage points from a similar poll conducted at the same time last year. Support for a smokefree law is evident across party lines, with a majority of Republicans (66 percent), independents (59 percent) and Democrats (65 percent) supporting the measure.

Other findings of the survey include:

- Voters understand the health hazards of secondhand smoke. Eighty-two (82) percent of voters feel that exposure to secondhand smoke is a serious (55 percent) or moderate (27 percent) health hazard.
- Voters feel all workers should be protected from secondhand smoke. Eighty-one (81) percent of Hoosier voters agree that all workers in the state should be protected from exposure to secondhand smoke in the workplace.
- Voters place priority on the right of employees and customers to breathe clean air in restaurants, bars, and casinos. Concerns about exposure to secondhand smoke translate to the very strong belief among voters (by a margin of 67 percent to 27 percent) that the right of employees and customers to breathe clean air in casinos, restaurants and bars is more important than the right of smokers to smoke and owners to allow smoking in these places.
- Indiana voters also feel that the state's hospitality establishments would be healthier and more enjoyable if they were smokefree. More than eight out of 10 voters (85 percent) believe that these places would be healthier under a smokefree law, and 78 percent want to be able to enjoy restaurants and bars in their community without smelling like smoke at the end of the evening.

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In releasing the results, the Coalition called on legislators to pass smokefree workplace legislation to make all Indiana workplaces smokefree, including all restaurants, bars, and casinos.

“At last Wednesday’s House Public Policy Committee hearing on HB 1213, legislators heard loudly and clearly that Indiana’s ability to attract and retain jobs is at risk if other states go smokefree and we don’t. They also heard loudly and clearly that every worker has the right to breathe clean air and that no one should have to choose between their health and their job,” said Danielle Patterson, Senior Advocacy Director, American Heart Association, Greater Midwest Affiliate.

“With the findings of this poll, they now know that the majority of voters statewide, in their region, and in their political party agree. They want a statewide smokefree workplace law that covers all workplaces including restaurants, bars and casinos, and they want it now – not ten years from now,” said Patricia Ells, Indiana Government Relations Manager for the American Cancer Society’s Great Lakes Division. “Government should listen to the people of Indiana and act quickly to make all workplaces smokefree.”

The survey of 500 voters statewide was commissioned for the Indiana Campaign for Smokefree Air (ICSA) with funding from the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The bi-partisan team of Public Opinion Strategies (R) and The Mellman Group (D) conducted a survey of 500 registered voters in Indiana who were interviewed by telephone January 27-28, 2009. The margin of error for this survey is +/-4.38%. The margin of error is higher for subgroups.

#### **Additional background:**

In 2006, former U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona released a landmark report on secondhand smoke. The report confirmed that exposure to secondhand smoke causes cancer, heart disease and serious lung ailments. Secondhand smoke contains dozens of carcinogens and more than 4,000 chemicals, including formaldehyde, cyanide, carbon monoxide and arsenic. As Surgeon General Carmona stated when releasing the report, "The debate is over. The science is clear. Secondhand smoke is not a mere annoyance but a serious health hazard."

The Surgeon General’s Report concluded that, “Establishing smokefree workplaces is the only effective way to ensure that secondhand smoke exposure does not occur in the workplace.”

As the Surgeon General’s Report concludes, the evidence is also clear that smokefree laws protect health without harming business. Dozens of studies and hard economic data have shown that smokefree laws do not harm sales or employment in restaurants and bars.

The growing evidence that secondhand smoke harms health, but smokefree laws do not harm business, has spurred the growing, bipartisan momentum across the country to pass smokefree laws. In the United States, 24 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico have passed smokefree laws that cover restaurants and bars. The states are Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana (extends to bars Sept. 1, 2009), Nebraska (June 1, 2009), New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont and Washington.