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Basham Press Release

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Basham Urges Swift Action on Smokefree Workplace Legislation

House appoints members to conference committee on smokefree bill, Senate to follow suit

LANSING, Mich.-Senator Ray Basham (D-Taylor) called on the Senate today to act quickly in appointing its members to the conference committee formed by the House of Representatives to further negotiate House Bill 4163, the House version of Senator Basham's smokefree workplace legislation. Representatives Brenda Clack (D-Flint), Andy Meisner (D-Ferndale) and Dave Hildenbrand (R-Lowell) were appointed as the House conferees by Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford) earlier this week.

"I have been fighting for smokefree workplaces for more than a decade and we're so close to seeing it through. It is my hope that this legislation is passed before the end of the year," said Basham. "I urge the Senate to take swift action in appointing members to the conference committee so we can begin negotiations and act quickly to once and for all protect the people of Michigan from secondhand smoke."

Since 2000, Senator Basham has been championing an effort in the Michigan Legislature to make Michigan workplaces, including bars and restaurants, smokefree. The current law won't change unless both chambers agree on the same version of legislation, and ongoing discussions center around possible exemptions. If the legislation is not passed by the end of the year, it will have to be reintroduced next year and will begin the entire legislative process all over.

Every day, thousands of Michigan residents who work in bars, restaurants, offices and factories are involuntarily subjected to secondhand smoke. According to the American Cancer Society, secondhand smoke is the third leading preventable cause of death in the United States, killing 38,000 to 65,000 nonsmokers every year. A study conducted at the University of California, Berkeley found that food service workers are approximately 50% more likely to develop lung cancer than the general public, because many are exposed to secondhand smoke at work. Thirty-three states have already passed similar legislation to protect their workers from deadly exposure to secondhand smoke, including Ohio, Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota.

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