

STATE SENATOR • TUPAC A. HUNTER • 5TH DISTRICT

Hunter Press Release

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Hunter Blasts Latest Half-Measure on Smoking Ban in Michigan

Exemptions Leave Too Many Workers and Families at Risk

LANSING—Today Sen. Tupac A. Hunter (D-Detroit) expressed frustration and disappointment at the House of Representatives' decision to include exemptions in smoke-free workplace legislation instead of voting on a measure that would protect and treat all Michigan workers equally. Their vote today resulted in another missed opportunity.

"This is clearly a public health issue that deserves a strong, swift solution, and today's measure fell far short. Including exemptions is a knee-jerk response that buys into lobbyist's scare tactics about jobs when their claims have already been proven false in other states. This is just another political volley when we need political courage. People are dying, our health care costs are skyrocketing and we're fiddling while people's health goes up in smoke. It's a shame we couldn't just do the right thing once and for all."

Every day, thousands of Michigan residents who work in bars, restaurants, offices and factories are involuntarily subjected to second-hand smoke. According to the American Cancer Society, second-hand 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 percent more likely to develop lung cancer than the general public, because many are exposed to second-hand 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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