

## **Smoke-free Action Network Action for Smoke-free Workplaces**

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JANUARY 9, 2006 - Charleston City Council passed a smoke-free ordinance in a 9-4 vote at tonight's city council meeting. The ordinance would make all indoor workplaces and public places in the City of Charleston smoke-free, including restaurants and bars.

Council chambers were packed with those interested in the topic. Twenty citizens spoke in support of the ordinance over a 45-minute period, while 9 spoke against for approximately 17 minutes.

The supporters ranged from community and organizational leaders to ordinary citizens. Supporters included representatives from the Charleston Branch NAACP, Trident United Way, the League of Women Voters of the Charleston Area, Hollings Cancer Center, the Medical University of South Carolina, the American Lung Association, the College of Charleston, and several business owners and workers.

Two musicians spoke in an appeal to make the venues where they perform, including bars, free of second-hand smoke. City council champions Paul Tinkler and Henry Fishburne have kept the issue alive on council for more than two years.

Charleston is believed to have been the first municipality to consider comprehensive smoke-free workplace protections nearly seven years ago in efforts led by former city council member Duke Hagerty.

Sullivan's Island became the first local municipality in the state to pass a comprehensive smoke-free ordinance on May 16, 2006. A recent district court ruling upheld the Island's ability to create its own smoke-free law. Following Sullivan's Island's lead, other local governments have passed their own smoke-free laws, including: Greenville, Columbia, Liberty, Bluffton, and Beaufort County.

Mayor Riley and several council members cited the 2006 Surgeon General's Report, "The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke," as motivation for passing the ordinance. The report warns that even limited exposure to secondhand smoke is dangerous, and that filtration systems are ineffective.

Charleston's council will proceed with the legislation as early as January 23 in a second and third reading.

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