

## **Smoking Bans**

Over the past few years, several cities across the country have implemented indoor smoking bans. As anti-smoking advocates seek to eliminate all smoking indoors, they ultimately have succeeded in shutting down businesses and eliminating jobs. Many of our guests and employees still choose to smoke and seek out establishments that offer that option--and then choose to stay home when that option isn't offered. For many tavern owners, the loss of business has forced them to reduce their staff or even close their doors altogether.

Although many bans only restrict indoor smoking, legislators are now including restrictions on smoking outside of public building – some so severe that they restrict smoking outside altogether. Washington State's recently passed smoking ban prevents individuals from smoking within 25 feet of an entrance or window of a building – often eliminating smokers from even going outside to smoke.

For many tavern owners, smoking customers make up a majority of their customers and even their employees. For these businesses, it is essential to provide these customers with an environment that respects their right to smoke. If these establishments are forced to refuse to accommodate these customers, they risk losing their business.

Advocates of these bans point to the risks of second hand smoke to justify this movement. However, these critics often ignore the lengths many tavern owners have gone to provide both their smoking and non-smoking customers a comfortable and safe environment. With the use of (often costly) filtration systems and separate smoking rooms, many of our businesses have been successful in providing an environment suitable for all our patrons.

As the demand for a smoking or smoke free environment varies from business to business, it is essential that tavern owners have the right to create the environment most suitable to their customers. ABL opposes the implementation of smoking bans and support the rights of business owners.