



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Media Contact**

Amy Barkley 502.777.8148

Betsy Janes 502.797.0638

**HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE DISCUSSES PROPOSED  
COMPREHENSIVE SMOKE FREE WORKPLACE LAW**

*Rep. Susan Westrom presents plan for statewide, indoor smoke-free legislation in 2012*

FRANKFORT, KY (October 19, 2011) – Kentucky workers may soon be able to breathe a little easier. The Interim Joint Committee on Health & Welfare discussed a proposed statewide smoke-free law today. Rep. Susan Westrom (D-Lexington) presented her plan to sponsor a bill in the 2012 legislative session that would institute a comprehensive, statewide smoke-free law in all indoor workplaces, restaurants, bars and other public places in Kentucky.

The Committee also heard testimony today from several other prominent supporters representing both the business and medical communities, including Dave Adkisson, President and CEO of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, and Dr. John Johnstone a Richmond-based cardiologist.

“It’s time Kentucky joined the growing number of states that have passed smoke-free workplace laws to protect the rights of all workers and the public to be free from exposure to secondhand smoke,” said Amy Barkley, Chair of the Smoke-Free Kentucky Campaign, a coalition of organizations and individuals who support making all public and workplaces 100% smoke-free. “The momentum at the local level has created a growing demand for a statewide smoke-free law. We know from experience here in Kentucky and across the nation that smoke-free laws are good for health, good for business, and essential to protecting citizens and workers from the proven hazards of secondhand smoke.”

Overwhelming scientific evidence proves that secondhand smoke causes premature death and disease in nonsmokers. Nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke in public places or at work significantly increase their risk of developing heart disease, lung cancer, and respiratory illnesses.

What used to be a primarily health-related issue now has overwhelming support among the state’s business community as employers realize the impact on their employees and on their bottom line.

“Over the last couple of years, our members have stood firmly behind a statewide smoking law,” said Dave Adkisson, president and CEO of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. “The attitude in Kentucky is changing toward smoking and the health effects can no longer be ignored. The business community now sees the effects of both smoking and secondhand smoke on our workforces in terms of absenteeism and lost productivity. We also see the effect on our insurance premiums and on our tax bills. Smoking is not only killing us, it is bankrupting us – both in terms of costs to business and cost of government. The Kentucky Chamber commends our legislative leaders for taking these important steps and we believe our leaders need to continue to improve Kentucky’s public policies with regard to smoking.”

Smoke-Free Kentucky commends Rep. Westrom’s efforts to pass a statewide smoke-free law. This is a critical health policy issue that would finally protect nonsmokers from secondhand smoke and play an important part in both the physical and fiscal health of Kentucky.

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*Smoke-Free Kentucky is a coalition of public health organizations, community-based groups, physicians, businesses, schools, faith community, and Kentucky residents who support making all public and work places 100% smoke-free.*