

Indiana moved closer on Thursday to become the next in a line of dozens of states to enact a public smoking ban. The House Public Health Committee voted in favor of a bill that would prohibit smoking in public places, except at casinos and pari-mutuel facilities.

Lawmakers in favor of the smoking ban had to give in on a full ban if they had any

chance to have the law passed. Other lawmakers argued that the revenue from the casinos and the pari-mutuel facilities was more important to the state than protecting the thousands of casino workers and patrons from the dangers of second-hand smoke.

"I think it is a complete travesty that casinos will still be allowed to offer indoor smoking if this ban is passed," said Rachel Jennings. "What they are basically saying is that they don't care about casino workers, they only care about money."

That sentiment was shared by many people who upon hearing of the new legislation, felt slighted by lawmakers. Tom Cronin said it best when he states, "This is another situation where the lobbyists who spend the most money get what they want in Indiana."

Casinos in other states have rallied behind the idea that a smoking ban would cause a severe drop off in revenue. The casinos have instilled fear in lawmakers, and in many cases around the US, legislators excluded the casinos from the ban. In Indiana, Representative Charlie Brown does not agree with that line of thinking.

"Even in the case of the smokers, they will drop off for a while," said Brown, "but they love gaming so they're going to come back even though they need to give up one vice to participate in another vice."

The Committee approved the limited ban by a 9-3 vote. The bill will now move to the full House, but it is in the Senate where the legislation will receive the most opposition. The past two years, smoking bans passed the House without casino exemptions, and each time the bills were defeated in the Senate. With the casino exemptions in place, lawmakers in the House are more confident the ban will pass the Senate this year.

Indiana Smoking Ban Passes; Casino Workers To Remain At Risk - Casino Gambling Web

Written by Administrator

Friday, 21 January 2011 00:08 -

January 21, 2011

Posted By Terry Goodwin

Staff Editor, CasinoGamblingWeb.com

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