

GOVERNOR KAINE, STATE LEGISLATORS ANNOUNCE GROUNDBREAKING AGREEMENT TO BAN SMOKING IN RESTAURANTS

~ Statewide ban will prohibit smoking in most bars and restaurants~

RICHMOND—Governor Timothy M. Kaine and key leaders in the General Assembly today announced a landmark agreement to pass a statewide smoking ban in Virginia's bars and restaurants. The legislation will ban smoking in nearly all restaurants across the Commonwealth, allowing narrow exceptions for private clubs and restaurants with a designated smoking room that is physically separated and independently ventilated from non-smoking dining areas.

"The dangers of second-hand smoke are undeniable—that's why I made a restaurant smoking ban one of my legislative priorities. This legislation will make Virginia's restaurants safer for both patrons and employees," Governor Kaine said. "I'm proud to have been able to work with leaders in both parties of the General Assembly to find common ground on this reasonable and necessary public health measure."

Today's announcement comes after Governor Kaine worked closely with legislative leaders to craft an agreement acceptable to both parties and both houses.

Virginia House Speaker William Howell also noted the agreement as a step forward for Virginians: "I am pleased to join in announcing a reasonable compromise on an issue important to Virginians," said Speaker Howell. "The compromise strikes a fair balance between the rights of smokers who choose to enjoy a legal product and the rights of other individuals who want to enjoy a smoke-free environment when eating at a restaurant. This legislation is all about finding opportunities for cooperation and compromise where possible. And, where state leaders can find and share such common ground, we should." ;

Second-hand smoke is responsible for an estimated 1,700 deaths per year, according to the Virginia Department of Health. In addition, the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids estimates the Commonwealth spends \$113 million a year on health care expenditures related to exposure to second-hand smoke.

To improve the health of Virginia's employees and minimize health risks in the work place, Governor Kaine signed [Executive Order 41](#) banning smoking in all state buildings and vehicles in October 2006.

The agreement makes Virginia part of a growing list of states around the country that are passing legislation curbing smoking in restaurants. Twenty-three other states and Puerto Rico have already passed bans on smoking indoors at bars and restaurants. Maryland and the District of Columbia passed similar restrictions on smoking in restaurants in 2007 and 2006, respectively.