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ed BURRELLE'S RE

Smoking ban too much; signs would be better

E-4314C
Businesses should be required to post signs on their doors if they permit smoking, but a proposed city ban on smoking goes too far.

The ordinance sets out to ban smoking in most public places, with the exception of bars, restaurants when used for private functions and retail tobacco stores.

Although well-intentioned, the ordinance would be an enforcement nightmare.

For example, a bar is defined as a place "used primarily for the sale of alcoholic beverages for consumption by guests on the premises and in which the sale of food and the provision of entertainment is merely incidental to the sale of alcoholic beverages."

Who would decide how incidental the entertainment is?

A restaurant is identified as a place "having food available for payment to be consumed on the premises, including coffeeshops, cafeterias, cafes, luncheonettes and soda fountains."

This is clear, but is it fair?

As far as the danger of smoke is concerned, what is the difference between a small restaurant or coffee shop and a bar? As far as we know, secondhand smoke is no more or less dangerous when taken with alcohol than when taken with coffee.

And what about other places? Is a bowling alley which serves alcoholic beverages a bar? Would having a smoke with a beer be banned in the bowling area, but OK in an enclosed bar area?

We do believe the public has a right to be protected from secondhand smoke. The federal government and others warn it can cause cancer.

Smoking should be banned in all publicly-owned buildings and in such small, public places as elevators, buses and taxi cabs.

Smoking is banned in many places which serve the public by fire regulations and the higher price of insurance if smoking were to be permitted.

We suggest that all businesses serving the public be required to

EDITORIAL:

What do you think?

Do you agree with the Palladium-Item's idea of the city requiring smoking or no smoking signs on businesses?

Do you support the ban of smoking in most businesses except bars as outlined in a proposed city ordinance?

Or do you think city council should leave the issue alone?

Please send your thoughts to:

Letters to the editor
Palladium-Item
Box 388, Richmond, IN 47375

Or fax to 966-6377.

post one of three signs at the entrance which says:

"Smoking prohibited."

"Smoking permitted."

"No-smoking section."

Those who want to breathe air only from a smoke-free environment will stay away from places with either of the last two signs.

As more people understand the risk of secondhand smoke and more businesses understand the potential liability, more places will become smoke-free.

Those who, for example, do not want to eat in places where smoking is permitted — even only in no-smoking sections — can vote with their dollars.

Those who want to smoke and eat also will vote with patronage.

The signs also will protect those people for whom even a sniff of smoke is dangerous. They will know before they enter, what to expect inside.

Both the smoking and non-smoking public would be served by the signs.

We believe the signs are all that is needed now. However, if council should decide to go farther and ban smoking in some places, the entrance signs still should be required.

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