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**FORD CALLS FOR REOPENING OF
OSHA HEARINGS ON SMOKING BANS**

WASHINGTON-- Citing a new report from the Congressional Research Service (CRS) that highly questions prior assumptions on second hand smoke, U.S. Senator Wendell Ford (D-KY) today called upon the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to reopen hearings on proposed smoking bans.

"This report from CRS -- a nonpartisan and objective organization -- shows there is absolutely no scientific justification for smoking bans or defacto bans like the proposed rule coming out of OSHA," Ford said. "These bureaucratic agencies are only pursuing an agenda to punish citizens who exercise the personal right to smoke."

He continued, "There is no scientific evidence for their agenda, and I think it's time to rethink these proposed rules on workplace and public smoking. The proposals will cost billions to implement and will provide little, if any, benefit to the public. For months they have manipulated data to make their case, but now we find that data simply is not there."

The CRS report released today, "Environmental Tobacco Smoke and Lung Cancer Risk," calls into question claims by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and OSHA on the dangers of second hand smoke. The CRS report refutes EPA's assertion that there is no safe level of Environmental Tobacco Smoke (second hand smoke). According to its independent study, CRS finds that the only reasonable chance of risk comes in extreme situations and even those cases are in need of more scientific research.

"In the twenty months CRS has conducted this review, their work finds no basis for continuing with forced smoking bans. Given this information, I think it's time for Big Brother government to get out of the lives of working adults and let them make their own choices about using tobacco," Ford said.

Last year OSHA proposed rules that would require workplaces including restaurants, to take the costly step of constructing separately ventilated smoking rooms (where absolutely no work can take place) or completely banning smoking in the entire facility

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