

Press Release

. . . from the Illinois House of Representatives

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May Pushes for State Smoking Ban

HIGHLAND PARK – State Rep. Karen May (D-Highland Park) announced Thursday that she will be the chief co-sponsor of House Bill 246, banning smoking in public places throughout the state of Illinois. This legislation would make Illinois the seventeenth state to go smoke-free.

“People may not realize the amount of harm that can be caused by secondhand smoke,” said May. “There is no safe way to separate smoking and non-smoking sections of public establishments like restaurants and taverns, and we need to protect the health and well-being of patrons and employees.”

May was chief co-sponsor of legislation in 2005 that gave local governments the authority to ban smoking in public places. Shortly after passing, the Surgeon General reported that any amount of secondhand smoke can cause health problems and there is no safe level. These actions prompted a patchwork of local governments to pass local smoking bans. However, an unintended consequence of the new law emerged as smokers have chosen to drive across municipal lines to patronize smoking establishments. A state-wide ban would level the playing field for business owners across Illinois.

“This legislation will help improve the health and quality of life for millions of Illinoisans, especially hospitality workers, non-smokers and children,” said May. “After seeing reports on the dangers of secondhand smoke, there is no way I would take my newborn grandson into an establishment that allowed smoking, even if it was sectioned off. That’s not enough, the irreversible harm would still be done.”

House Bill 246 will be considered by the House during the spring session. While May’s initiative bans smoking in all public establishments, it provides exemptions for private residences used as businesses that are not open to customers, some hotel rooms, private nursing home rooms, and certain tobacco stores in operation prior to the bill’s passage. For more information, contact May at (847) 831-5858, or visit www.ilga.gov.

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