

Why Not to Exempt Bingo Halls from Smoke-free Laws

- A smoke-free ordinance that exempts charitable gaming does not protect the health of the volunteers or patrons. Athletes, cheerleaders, families and community members should not have to volunteer or attend smoky fundraisers. It may be easier to obtain volunteers to work smoke-free bingo.
 - Smoke-free ordinances have had no effect on bingo revenues in Kentucky.¹ Additionally, non-smokers significantly contribute to bingo revenues, and some non-smokers avoid smoky bingo halls.² In Georgetown, bingo attendance increased as the air pollution in the bingo halls decreased.
 - Money can be raised during outdoor smoke breaks. According to the Kentucky Department of Charitable Gaming, volunteers may sell pull-tabs outside the bingo hall location.
 - Air quality in Lexington bingo halls before they were covered by the smoke-free law was dangerously polluted with the toxic chemicals in secondhand smoke (almost 7 times the outdoor air quality standard).
 - Secondhand smoke is a toxic mixture of harmful gases and chemicals such as arsenic, formaldehyde, and hydrogen cyanide. There is no safe level of secondhand smoke, and exposure is a cause of heart disease, lung cancer, breast cancer, and asthma attacks.^{3,4}
 - Even short exposures (5-30 minutes) to secondhand smoke can cause heart attacks and respiratory problems, including asthma attacks.⁵
 - Exempting certain establishments from smoke-free laws can be problematic.
 - Exemptions make enforcement of the ordinance more challenging, due to confusion over which venues are covered by the ordinance and which are not.
 - Business owners believe exemptions create an uneven playing field.
 - Exemptions can lead to legal challenges, which can be costly to the city. Lexington has spent over \$330,000 in legal fees since the passage of its smoke-free law in 2003 including the state Supreme Court case and ongoing litigation, largely from the private organization exemption.
1. Pyles MK, Hahn EJ. Smoke-free Legislation and Charitable Gaming in Kentucky. *Tob Control*. November 6, 2008 2009(18):60-62.
 2. Higbee C, Bauer JE, Cummings KM, Wiecezorek W, Alford T, Hyland A. Avoidance of smoky establishments: findings from Erie and Niagara Counties in New York. *J Public Health Manag Pract*. Nov-Dec 2004;10(6):508-510.
 3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease and Prevention and Promotion, Office of Smoking and Health;2006.
 4. Johnson KC, Glantz SA. Evidence secondhand smoke causes breast cancer in 2005 stronger than for lung cancer in 1986. *Prev Med*. Jun 2008;46(6):492-496.
 5. Glantz SA, Parmley WW. Even a little secondhand smoke is dangerous. *JAMA*. 2001;286(4):462-463.