

Statement of Ald. Michael S. D'Amato
January 24, 2007

I applaud Governor Doyle for his leadership in proposing a healthier Wisconsin and a healthier Milwaukee. Specifically, I want to commend him for his statewide plan to create smoke-free workplaces, including restaurants and taverns. The evidence is overwhelming that such bans reduce smoking and promote better health. In addition, across the world we have seen citizens demanding more smoke-free environments, and we've also seen businesses and customers adopt this new, healthier lifestyle approach without negatively affecting the bottom line.

In Milwaukee we have been considering the idea of a smoking ban that would include restaurants and bars. The primary impediment to passing such legislation has been the argument by small businesses in Milwaukee that their customers would be likely to cross municipal borders to patronize establishments that allow smoking, thereby causing them financial harm. There is certainly some merit to that argument. A patchwork of different municipal policies regarding smoking is not good government and creates a potential scenario of winners and losers. It also allows opponents of such a ban the opportunity to pit business against business and village against village. By taking a bold but necessary stand on this issue Governor Doyle has not only promoted good health for every citizen of Wisconsin, he has also stood up for good government and fairness for the small business owner.

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