



REPRESENTATIVE KEVIN MEYER

HOUSE DISTRICT 19

SPONSOR STATEMENT

HB 136

“An Act relating to municipal regulation of smoking in certain places.”

House Bill 136 would add an additional section to AS.18.35, regarding “local government regulation of smoking in public places and workplaces.” The purpose of this bill is to make clear the intent of the Alaska State Legislature that it does not restrict local governments from enacting stricter laws regulating smoking in public buildings and workplaces in their communities.

Local governments in Alaska are in a unique position to respond to and enforce their communities’ requests for greater regulation of smoking. The proposed legislation recognizes the rights of citizens to petition their local government leaders for more restrictive measures regarding smoking. The Municipality of Anchorage has recently responded to its citizens’ requests for local regulation of smoking in public buildings and workplaces, and experienced a successful implementation of its “Prohibition of Smoking in Public Places” ordinance.

Numerous studies have confirmed that smoking tobacco products is a major contributor to indoor air pollution, and that breathing second-hand smoke is a cause of numerous diseases, including lung cancer, heart disease, respiratory infection, etc., even in non-smokers. Children, elderly, individuals with cardiovascular disease, and individuals with impaired respiratory functions, are at special risk. More restrictive measures that can be developed and enforced at a local level are needed regarding smoking, particularly in the workplace and in the access area around public buildings, in order to protect public health.

It is in the public interest and the best interest of the State to protect the public health and welfare of the citizens of Alaska, by clarifying that local governments may enact and enforce stricter regulation of smoking than currently prescribed in AS 18.35.
