

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Joy Donovan Brandon
American Cancer Society
Cell: 214-707-3724
joy.donovonbrandon@cancer.org



City Council's Historic Vote Approving Comprehensive Smoke-free Ordinance Clears the Air for Fort Worth

FORT WORTH, Texas – Dec. 12, 2017 – Fort Worth this evening joined more than 80 cities across the state when its City Council voted to implement a comprehensive smoke-free ordinance eliminating the exposure of secondhand smoke in all workplaces, protecting the health of every resident.

The Smoke-free Fort Worth coalition applauds and thanks the council for creating a safer, healthier environment for everyone who lives, works and visits our city, where 91 percent of residents agree that everyone deserves the right to breathe smoke-free air at work and in public places.

Mayor Betsy Price and the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce supported the measure, which removes deadly secondhand smoke from bars and bingo parlors. This important addition to the city's clean indoor air ordinance protects service industry employees who, along with musicians and entertainers, breathe more secondhand smoke while at work than any other type of employee and can suffer from many of the same illnesses caused by smoking. The U.S. Surgeon General found that secondhand smoke is a proven cause of lung cancer, heart disease and serious respiratory illnesses such as bronchitis, low birth weight and sudden infant death syndrome. The ordinance will go into effect in 90 days.

"This is a great day for the city of Fort Worth," said Dr. Mark Koch, who chaired the Smoke-free Fort Worth coalition. "Our coalition set out to make our city healthier for everyone who lives and works here, and I'm excited to see the City Council achieve that goal."

"We know secondhand smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, including at least 69 carcinogens, and we are grateful to the City Council for acting on this urgent health policy," said Cam Scott, Texas government relations director for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network.

"Tonight's vote is not just a win for every member of our workforce, but a win for the future of Fort Worth," said cardiologist and American Heart Association Board member Dr. Sreenivus Gudimetla. "We applaud the mayor and City Council for taking a tangible step to protect our community from the threat of heart disease and stroke."

"This a major public health win for Fort Worth residents who visit and work in public places," said Holly Motteram, executive director of the American Lung Association in Texas. "There are no safe levels of exposure to secondhand smoke, and this imperative ordinance will protect our lungs and help keep indoor air safe to breathe."

"For all of Fort Worth's blue collar and hospitality workers who have been putting their health at risk to provide for their families, this is a good day," said Onjewel Smith, southern states representative for Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights. "Everyone has the right to a safe and healthy workplace."

Prior to this evening's vote, Fort Worth was the only major city in Texas without an ordinance protecting citizens from exposure to secondhand smoke in all workplaces.

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