

Statement of Ald. Bob Donovan May 5, 2009

It now seems Governor Doyle and some state legislators are willing to throw out the Constitution on their crusade to snuff out smoking in Wisconsin.

First, we find out that today's hearing before the state Senate's Health, Health Insurance, Privacy, Property Tax Relief and Revenue Committee was publicized barely 24 hours before it started, a cowardly move meant to deny the opponents of the proposed ban any chance of mustering a strong showing or a voice at the hearing.

Second, although the minimum public notice of the meeting was bad, just as egregious in my estimation is the fatal damage the ban will surely bring to thousands of independent small businesses in the state. The proposed ban would cover smoking in all workplaces, including restaurants and bars. In my district there are dozens of small corner taverns – many of which have been in operation since long before I was born. The economic downturn has already brought immense pain to the hard-working families that own these small but vital businesses, but the smoking ban will mean the end of the line for many of these proud residents.

Forget about smokers' rights – now we're talking about fundamental issues of open government, fair play, and the ability of citizens to address and respond to a major proposed new law being weighed by their government.

It's a sad day for individual rights and open government here in Wisconsin.

Shame on you, Governor Doyle. And shame on any collaborating state legislators.

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