

End Michigan's shame, pass smoking ban

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The Legislature has choked before, leaving residents and visitors to this fair state still gasping as they encounter smoke-filled air in public places like restaurants and bars.

So let's review the arguments as lawmakers contemplate one more attempt to limit smoking in [Michigan](#) 🗳️.

The primary point, often lost in the haze, is that this is first and foremost a *workplace* ban on smoking. Few workers these days have to put up with colleagues' smoking; indeed, smokers huddled outside the doors of their places of employment are the norm, rather than the exception. Why should bartenders and the wait staff have a lessened expectation for clean indoor air, just because it is their customers exhaling [carcinogens](#) 🗳️ rather than their co-workers?

Second, and perhaps more to the point given Michigan's shaky national reputation these days, even states with agricultural ties to tobacco have made more progress in clearing the air. Smoky restaurants are a tipoff to out-of-staters that the Michigan remains mired in a previous century, an omen that's visible and concrete even before they pick up on the state's obsession with its industrial past. How well do you think the Pure Michigan campaign matches reality once tourists step into a bar for a beer?

In a perfect world, lawmakers would not exempt casino floors -- their workers deserve clean lungs, too -- but after years of stalemate any significant smoke-free progress would be welcome.

Which leaves the hope that this time, finally, lawmakers won't keep blowing smoke.