

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6213

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce, Research & Development, February 1, 2006

Title: An act relating to amending Initiative 901 to allow smoking in buildings conducting religious ceremonies where smoking is part of the ritual.

Brief Description: Providing a religious exemption to the clean indoor air act.

Sponsors: Senators Regala, Franklin, Kline and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce, Research & Development: 1/24/06, 2/1/06 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 6213 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Brown, Keiser and Prentice.

Staff: Alison Mendiola (786-7483)

Background: The Washington Clean Indoor Act, enacted in 1985, prohibits smoking in public places except in designated smoking areas. Last year, Initiative 901 was passed by the voters and became effective on December 9, 2005. Initiative 901 amends the Clean Indoor Act by prohibiting smoking in all public places, workplaces, and within twenty-five feet from entrances, exits, windows that open, and ventilation intakes that serve an enclosed area where smoking is prohibited.

Public places now include schools, bars, taverns, bowling alleys, skating rinks, casinos, reception areas, and no less than seventy-five percent of the sleeping quarters within a hotel or motel that are rented to guests. A public place does not include a private residence unless the residence is used to provide licensed child care, foster care, adult care, or other similar social services care on the premises.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Clean Indoor Act definition of a public place and place of employment is amended to exclude the specific location where religious ceremonies are conducted when smoking is part of the ritual.

Substitute

Bill Compared to Original Bill: Under the original bill, a building or part of a building that would otherwise ban smoking would permit smoking where smoking is part of a religious ritual. The "building, or part of a building," language was changed to "specific location".

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill is about allowing people to continue what they have been doing, in some instance, for 500 years. People whose religious ceremonies involve smoke shouldn't have to justify their actions or feel like criminals.

Testimony Against: More research should be done before moving forward and amending Initiative 901. This matter should be dealt with at the local level. The bill as written is too broad. This would permit smoking in an entire building during a religious ceremony.

Who Testified: PRO: David Alger, Associated Ministries; Strom Reyes, self; Deborah Moran, self; and Theodore Moran, self.

CON: Chris Covert-Bowlds, MD, American Lung Association of WA; Roger Valdez, Public Health of Seattle-King County; and Michael Shaw, American Heart Association.

Signed in/Unable to Testify: Jennifer Shaw, ACLU-WA; Nick Federici, American Lung Association of WA.