

## **Texas Restaurant Association**

For the past two sessions TRA has worked with a coalition of health groups on passage of a comprehensive statewide smoking ban. These groups are motivated by an interest in protecting the public from the effects of secondhand smoke, our interest stems from the economic impact of varying standards in local regulations.

Local restrictions vary widely and create disparities between different types of operations, for example bars and restaurants, and across city boundaries. These disparities have hurt operators who must compete for business on an unequal footing. This has been most keenly felt by our operators in the major metropolitan areas.

One of our past presidents operates a restaurant in Dallas located just across the street from the City of Addison. Dallas banned smoking in restaurants, while Addison continued to allow smoking. His smoking customers simply drove to the restaurants on the Addison side of the highway. His happy hour business dropped off significantly and this, in turn, affected his dinner traffic since those customers had chosen to go to Addison.

Passage of a comprehensive statewide ban has proven elusive. While we continue to support legislation seeking this end, a proposal that would eliminate the economic disparities impacting our members in the major metropolitan areas of the state would solve much of the problem facing our industry.

If the support for a comprehensive statewide ban does not exist in the upcoming session we would encourage you to consider a scaled down version. I would be happy to answer any question you may have.