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## It's Still Time

Coalition calls for movement of smoke free bill in legislature

**Madison, February 20, 2008**—A meeting between members of the It's Time coalition, Senate Majority Leader Russ Decker and The Tavern League of Wisconsin ended without progress Wednesday after the Tavern League refused to move from a proposed July 1, 2011 date to end smoking in bars and restaurants.

During this and various other discussions the coalition has moved from the original 2008 implementation—giving bars and restaurants seven months to comply which is the standard timeframe in more than 80 percent of statewide smoke free laws—to respecting the 2010 date set by the Senate Public Health committee, but still no deal.

The opposition then voiced concern over several other issues, none of which were included in the committee-passed version of the bill, but in the spirit of negotiations we respected these concerns and offered numerous solutions in an attempt to find common ground. Again, no deal.

It is difficult to find compromise when only one side is willing to give. The opposition's inflexibility is not just delaying progress on this important piece of health legislation, it's blocking it.

However, there's still time to act. The vast majority of people in Wisconsin want this bill, groups as diverse as the American Cancer Society and the Wisconsin Restaurant Association want this bill, even Republicans and Democrats want this bill.

The question now is who sets public health policy the Wisconsin legislature or the Wisconsin Tavern League?

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