

SMOKING: Statewide workplace ban likely to surface in Legislature again

From A-7

nents in the past have seemed amenable to a phase-in for bars, but a much shorter one, perhaps six months to a year.

"I think probably one of the points that's going to get the most discussion is what the implementation date is going to be," Gottlieb said.

The other issue is whether communities will be allowed to pass bans during a phase-in. Ban supporters sound unwilling to compromise on that point, so that might be an option for a trade-off — no pre-emption in exchange for a longer phase-in **time.**

What does Gov. Jim Doyle think about a ban?

He supports it, though he said last year he's willing to sign a bill that includes a phase-in period, as long as it's not overly long.

Will there be enough votes in the Legislature for a bill to pass?

That's a good question. Richards says yes, based on who he's talked to. Bernard Schaber agrees: "There seems to be quite a bit of support." Gottlieb sounded less sure: "I think that's an open question. In the Assembly, I think it would be a close vote. But I think that something will happen this

session, either in the budget or as a piece of standalone legislation."

Does the fact that the Democrats have the majority in both the Assembly and the Senate increase its chances of passing?

Not necessarily. Decker is a Democrat and holds the cards in the Senate. A bill is more likely to get a vote in the Assembly with Democrat Mike Sheridan as speaker. But this issue doesn't break on party lines. It's much more of a local issue, with legislators in the northern part of the state more likely to oppose it because of the impact on the small bars in their districts.