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## Editorial: Without public pressure, opponents can derail smoking ban bill

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February 3, 2008

The only way a statewide workplace smoking ban is likely to pass this year is through public pressure.

If people put enough heat on their legislators to at least take a vote on the smoking ban bill, it might happen.

But it's clear that legislators aren't likely to take it up on their own.

The strategy by the bill's authors — Rep. Steve Wieckert, R-Appleton, and Sen. Fred Risser, D-Madison — was to introduce the bill first in the Senate. It passed a committee vote, with an amendment to delay a ban for bars and restaurants until 2010.

But now, the bill has hit a roadblock in Senate Majority Leader Russ Decker, D-Weston. He backs a proposal by Sen. Roger Breske, D-Eland, a former Tavern League of Wisconsin president, to further delay and weaken the ban. The proposal is unacceptable.

So Wieckert will take a version of the bill that passed the Senate committee to the Assembly. It'll have to pass another committee and then be scheduled for a vote by Assembly Leader Mike Huebsch, R-West Salem.

When this debate started, the Assembly seemed like the least likely house to pass a ban. Now, with Senate Democratic leadership apparently under the thumb of the Tavern League, it might be the best option.

The only way this bill can get unstuck before the legislative session ends next month is if enough people convince their lawmakers that it's the right thing to do.

Critical mass can push the bill through — if there's enough of it.