

Pass workplace smoking ban

Now that lawmakers have finished squabbling over the budget, they can get on to other pressing matters.

One of them is the statewide workplace smoking ban that has been languishing for months now.

Smoke kills. It kills those who invite it into their own lungs and those who have it forced into their bodies simply by being near a smoker — in a bar, at work or while eating in a restaurant.

Communities, other states, even entire countries have recognized this fact and prohibited smoking in public places.

It's time Wisconsin did the same.

Not only would a statewide ban allow all businesses to compete on a level playing field, it would increase the social pressure for smokers to quit.

In the long run, fewer smokers means lower health care costs and fewer slow, agonizing deaths from cancer, emphysema and other tobacco-related maladies.

Pass this bill.