



Organization: Talbot Partnership in Talbot County, MD

Contact: Paula Lowry

Q: What did you change a law, a regulation, an ordinance, a policy or other?

A: The Talbot Partnership changed an existing county ordinance that prohibited smoking in all public places but exempted bar areas in restaurants. As a result of the new ordinance, Talbot County has 100% clean indoor air in all public buildings including restaurants and bars.

Q: Where did the idea to make the change originate?

A: In 1993, the city council passed a law prohibiting smoking in all public places, except bar areas in restaurants (we do not have stand alone bars). We achieved a referendum win in 1994. Following our success, we knew that the community needed and was ready for a stricter law. We followed in the footsteps of Montgomery County, MD as well as Delaware, New York City and California just to name a few.

Q: What elected or other government officials did you meet with to accomplish this change? And at what point(s) in the process did you meet with them?

A: During the election of 2002, we met with all city council candidates to educate them on this issue. Once the sponsors were ready to introduce the bill, we met with them on a weekly basis until the final vote.

Q: What materials did you use to make your case that the change was necessary and would produce the desired results?

A: We cited scientific information about the harmful effects of secondhand smoke, the success of laws in other states and jurisdictions, evidence that ventilation systems do not work, and proof that businesses would not lose revenue.

Q: Through what system/process did you make your change?

A: The law was passed by the county council.

Q: Who were your allies in making this change?

A: Our allies were the American Heart Association, the Campaign For Tobacco Free Kids, the American Cancer Society, Talbot County Public Schools, the American Lung Association, the Talbot County Health Department, Smoke Free Maryland, local youth groups, BREATHE (an employee protection group), the Talbot Partnership, GASP(Group Against Smokers Pollution), and physician's groups.

Q: Who opposed this change?

A: This change was opposed by the Restaurant Association of Maryland, the Talbot County Chamber of Commerce, tobacco lobbyists and some restaurants.

Q: Did you testify in front of local boards or state governing bodies?

A: We testified regarding the science of secondhand smoke and research of business revenues from other jurisdictions that have already passed this type of ordinance.

Q: Did you participate in media advocacy to make your change?

A: We ran educational ads on the radio and in the newspaper. We also mounted a campaign to submit letters to the editor. We did not use television because we live in a small rural area near expensive television markets, making television ads unaffordable and unnecessary.

Q: Please describe in detail the outcome of your change.

A: All smoking is prohibited in ALL public buildings in Talbot County.