

February 12, 2004

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## B.R.E.A.T.H.E.

Bar and Restaurant Employees Advocating Together for a Healthy (smokefree) Environment

**Rocita G:** For 12 years, I worked as a waitress in smoky restaurant/bars. I needed the job to support myself and put food on my table. I would go home from work everyday with a headache from the smoke. The smoke clung to my clothes, hair, and skin. The worst part was when I would cough up black mucous. One day I was working and I felt something pop in my lungs. I went to the doctor. He told me I had lung cancer and only 2 to 4 years to live. When I walk 3 blocks, I'm out of breath. I've never smoked in my life. I'm only 37 years old.

**Heather C:** I've been a waitress for 40 years to earn a decent living for my daughter and myself. The air where I worked was blue from the smoke. My doctor told me I have a smoker's tumor and I'm dying. I never smoked a day in my life. I never smoked.

**John S:** I am a bartender. Our environment is often reduced to a single room with no space to maneuver away from the toxic clouds of smoke. There is no ventilation system in the world that will work against smoke blown two feet away from your face.

**Suzanne H:** I worked as a cocktail waitress in smoky restaurants and bars for 14 years. I have onset emphysema. My doctor says my constant exposure to tobacco smoke contributed significantly to my emphysema. No one should have to breathe tobacco smoke to hold a job.

**Jackie W:** I am choking from excessive secondhand smoke and my clothes and hair are permeated with the putrid smell of cigarettes. This is particularly disturbing for me as I am pregnant. Exposure to secondhand smoke during pregnancy is known to cause serious risks to the survival and health of a baby. This is not fair. Others' *choice* to smoke is infringing on my *right* to work in a healthy environment.

**Matinah P:** I have been a bartender at a restaurant for the past two years. During the course of working there, I discovered that I was two months pregnant. I immediately stopped working, but my unborn child had been exposed to two months of smoke. I have never smoked a day in my life and I only pray that this does not have a negative effect on my baby.

**Courtney S:** *I am a 22 year-old bartender. I don't think it is fair that I have to suffer because some people think that it is a "personal freedom" to blow poisons in other people's faces. The solution really is simple, don't let that happen.*

**Silina H:** I am a working pregnant mom. Unfortunately I work in an environment that allows smoking. I would love to see that changed! I like my job but dread going to work and coming home to my husband and child smelling like I've been in a bar all day. I mean good gracious my car smells like a smoke bomb and I don't smoke!

**Tammara P:** I have been working in bars for about 10 years now and have had the misfortune of several trips to the health clinic for tobacco related illnesses. No one should have to breathe in toxic fumes for eight/plus hours a day!

**Athena R:** As a college student, I have worked in restaurants/bars out of necessity to earn money. I had to work in order to pay the bills. I urge you to please support smokefree workplaces. Secondhand smoke is dangerous, and we need to protect all people's health equally.

**Tiffany A:** I have been working in bars and restaurants for over eight years. This has been the only type of job that I have been able to work while attending college full-time. I have graduated college and continue to work full-time in a restaurant so that I can afford my school loan repayment bills while trying to break into my field of study. I choose to work this kind of job for the money to support myself, but I do not choose to be punished. I want to make a change for the better for the health of all bar and restaurant customers and employees.

**Mike F:** I am a bartender. I am not trying to take away anyone's right to smoke. You have the right to make yourself sick, but you should not have the right to make me sick.

**Dena G:** As a former bartender and waitress, I would leave work coughing up mucus and barely able to breath--all of which was caused by secondhand smoke. Many bartenders, like I was, are unable to leave the bar area to escape the smoke. Therefore, for up to 8 hours a day, bartenders are breathing in these noxious chemicals.

**Tyrone S:** I am a musician. It's time for musicians and bartenders and waitresses to have dignified and safe working conditions.

**Joannie C:** One of my daughters is working here way through college as a waitress in a restaurant in Baltimore County. She is exposed to second hand smoke almost 40 hours per week and it deeply concerns me that her health will be affected.

**John B:** My wife went to work as a bartender at the local yacht club private bar while I took care of our children. The smoking there was incredible, and each night she'd arrive home with headaches from the smoke. It is

horrible that anyone should have to be subjected to another person's smoke while they are earning a living.

**Carolyn V:** I worked in nightclubs for years and finally had to quit working and even going out to them socially because I developed asthma. People working to put money on the table shouldn't have to get sick to hold a job.

**Diane Q:** My friend was a bartender who didn't smoke. He died of pancreatic cancer. The number one cause of pancreatic cancer is smoking and/or secondhand smoke.

**David B:** I used to be a musician, playing in smokey clubs. It was AWFUL, but there was nothing I could do about it. Please help move forward -- OUT OF THE SMOKE AGES. NOBODY should have to breathe other peoples' carcinogens in order to do their job.

**Larry R:** I am a working musician for over fifty years and I can't begin to give you the substance of my personal experience of observing how the breathing of tobacco smoke affects your health working in a smoking environment. It is abominable. The tobacco industry has deliberately misinformed the public about the inclusion of chemicals in their products and the life threatening implications of smoking.

**Kim G:** I worked in restaurants throughout high school and college. I was forced to be in a smokey environment night after night. I am now an oncology social worker and see first hand how horrific the effects of lung cancer are on women. Please pass the smoke-free workplace law.

**Anna K:** As a bartender this issue directly affects me and my health. I am asking for your support of smokefree legislation.

**Thom K:** I am a long time survivor with HIV (17+ yrs). I have worked in the restaurant/hotel/bar industry most of my adult life as I need a part time job to supplement my income. Bartending allows me to work a minimal amount of hours and earn the extra income. People say to me, well it's your choice if you work there. Yes it is, so why must I be subjected to second hand smoke.

**Sophie M:** In my previous job I worked in a restaurant waiting tables and bartending. While we had a nonsmoking section for patrons (with questionable effectiveness), there was no nonsmoking section for workers. If a restaurant or bar were found to have damaging levels of asbestos or radon, it would surely be closed as a public health risk. Why don't we treat secondhand smoke, which is filled with deadly carcinogens, the same way?

**Jamie G:** I am a young singer and musician with asthma. Working in a place filled with smoke is almost impossible. I used to play in bars, restaurants and clubs and would come home feeling like I had bronchitis with a horrible cold. I would lose my voice for several days. The physical demands of singing necessitate optimal health and that includes staying away from smoking or smoky environments. Allowing people to smoke in these places is hindering my career and keeping a talent from being heard.

**Hadassah H:** I work at a local bar and I love my job, but I detest the fact that I am continually exposed to second-hand cigarette smoke against my will. It is easy to say, "Get another job", but the service industry is one of the better paying jobs in our community.

**Brittany L:** For nine years I worked in restaurants and bars to support tuition bills. On an average 8 hour shift, I was forced to breath in the secondhand smoke equivalent of a half pack of cigarettes. I am a believer in the right to work in a smoke-free environment.

**David F:** I am a former dishwasher, waiter, and bartender. I started working when I was 13 washing dishes in a bar and grill. I continued working in the restaurant/bar business as a waiter and bartender up until I graduated from college. The jobs were ideal. They allowed me to work at night, while pursuing my education during the day. All workers deserve a safe, healthy, smokefree work environment. No one should have to risk his health to hold a job.

**Deanne B:** My son works in a restaurant. He comes home smelling of smoke and coughing from that environment and hates it! All workers should be able to not breathe other people's nauseating tobacco smoke in their workplace.

**Joyce H:** I am the mother of a college age student who works to help herself through college. She has asthma and has to work in this smoke filled environment. Please sign a bill and make life better for all of us.

**Lee H:** I have given serious consideration to taking on a part time job bartending to supplement my base income. I have all but ruled out this option, which is otherwise very desirable, due to the increased health risks from secondhand smoke

**Jenna M:** My husband loves his job as a brewmaster of a local brewpub BUT cannot work with the smoke ANYMORE. We are looking for a new job for him because of the severe health conditions he has had to endure with daily secondhand smoke. This establishment is a family restaurant and No ONE should have to endure smoke while

working! I urge you to pass the law for clean air inside ALL establishments before more people become ill. Secondhand smoke DOES CAUSE CANCER!

**Juliana J:** For many years, I have worked in smoky restaurant and bar settings as a cook, waitress, and musician. I believe that ALL deserve a safe, healthy, smoke free work environment. I know FIRST HAND that second hand smoke is hurting workers' health.

**Madeline R:** I had to quit a high-paying job years ago because of smoke in the workplace. I sympathize with anyone who is forced to work in such an environment. This unhealthful practice should not be allowed to continue.

**Jill H:** I work in five different restaurants. Two years ago my owner-operator decided to make his operations smoke-free! I used to go home with terrible headaches, sinus problems and an overall feeling of illness. I didn't realize it was due to the second hand smoke I was inhaling all day, until it wasn't there any more. I can't believe legislators wouldn't want to protect the people that have put them into office.

**Richard L:** My daughter works in a restaurant and already suffers from breathing difficulties. Needless exposure to someone else's smoke is very hazardous to her health. Please get rid of smoke in the workplace making life a little better for everybody.

**Adam S:** I work bartending 4 days a week and I am disgusted with the amount of smoke I am constantly enveloped in. PLEASE stop the smoking for the benefit of EVERYONE!!!!

**David F:** I have been a food and beverage professional for over 30 years, managing private clubs and restaurants. I feel I have the right to a healthy work environment. I shouldn't have to de-smoke myself every time I work or go out.

**Mollie M:** I am a full time female student who bartends to pay rent and living expenses. When I started bartending I found out what it is like to be a chain smoker - secondhand. I was a professional dancer before I chose to go to school. My stamina has been badly effected by working as a bartender! I cough a lot and simply climbing stairs gets me winded and the coughing and headaches effect my concentration in classes. It is very important for every single worker to have a smokefree environment. No one should spend a day recovering from their job.

**Jacqueline M:** When I worked in restaurants I was disgusted by the odor in my cloths and feeling in my lungs when I would return home after my shift. I have also known people who have died of lung cancer as a direct result of smoking. With the realization that second-hand smoke is a deadly toxin, I am amazed that there is even a question of continuing to allow workers and patrons to suffer and risk their health for the mere inconveniencing of a smoker's addiction. Thank you for recognizing the importance of supporting a safe and healthy work place for all.

**Emmett I:** I am a bartender. My girlfriend is also a bartender. Second-hand smoke has badly affected her health and mine. Both of us now are constantly coughing. We can't go on working in these conditions, but what can we do? Bartending jobs are incredibly scarce, and that's all either of us know how to do! She has to put herself through school, and only has certain nights she can work. I have been tending bar for five years, full time. To try to find a new profession now would be financial suicide.

**Stephen S:** I am a bartender and professional actor working in restaurants and bars for the last six years. My job is ideal because it allows me to work at night, making the necessary money I need to sustain myself in this city, and pursue my acting career during the day. I have a right, personally, as do all restaurant/bar/club workers, to work in a safe, smoke free environment. When I committed to my job, I committed to selling food and drinks, not to being exposed to cancer causing smoke.

**Nancy K:** I've worked in several restaurants and bars. It's not fair to ask the people working at a job to breath in foul, polluted air. You just can't waive away a person's health. Nothing makes up for that.

**Dylan C:** My employer always looked at me like I had 6 heads when I'd tell them about the unsafe air quality at my job. Their reply was, "You work in a bar!" So I should die? I can remember turning blue gasping for air, trying to hold my breath as I ran through the room with trays of cocktails. Philip Morris is one of our biggest clients, hell, we can't tell them not or where to smoke. Again swallow it. I would come home in tears. I went to see an Occupational Environmental Hazard doctor. I was diagnosed with Occupational Asthma. Since then, I wolf down inhalers, bronchodilators, steroids. I have never smoked a cigarette in my life. This is my reward for 6 hard worked years in a bar. The law really should be about the right to breathe and NOT the right to smoke.

**Catherine D:** I am a working jazz singer - a career I've trained and worked hard for. I'm doing it with the best, have international record distribution and radio play. I have asthma and singing in these smoky restaurants, clubs and bars is significantly detrimental to my health and, once the asthma kicks in in these workplaces, my ability to perform my work at my best. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to pursue my profession and my career in the same smokefree work environment afforded to so many other New Yorkers. I'm not asking for anything they don't already have and I think I deserve to have a smokefree workplace as much as these other New Yorkers do.

**Nathan B:** I often wonder if I will be doing the right thing by returning to work at the Millennium Hilton. On 9/11 my workplace was destroyed and God willing I will be able to return to work this coming January. I just wanted to let you know how not working in a smoke filled bar every day has affected my health. Since the Hilton has closed my health improvements have been dramatic. I wonder about the damage that was caused to my lungs from breathing smoke filled air every day. I had chronic asthma. Not just the kind that you see people with an inhaler but the kind that puts you in the hospital and jeopardizes your life. During one attack I lost consciousness in the emergency room and fortunately was revived without any lasting effects from oxygen deprivation. Until 9/11 I had been taking daily steroids for my lung

condition along with corti-steroids for allergies. I need to work; I feel that my rights to enjoy a safe & healthy work environment are being violated. There is no reason not to protect my health.

**Jeremy B:** I am a bartender. New York City an opportunity to exert its leadership in a profound and important way. By ensuring the right of all workers in New York City to earn their livings and build their lives without fear of the undeniable risks of second hand cigarette smoke, New York City can better the lives lived in our city, and serve as an example to communities across the country.

**Adam S:** I have worked as a bartender for years. I am a non-smoker, but I can feel the secondhand smoke effect my health. Please support smokefree workplace legislation for the better health of all of us.

**Katharine E:** As a professional singer I am frequently finding my personal and professional health compromised by other peoples' use of cigarettes. There is NO compromise that will eliminate second-hand smoke from invading the lungs of non-smokers if smokers are allowed to smoke in public venues. This is unfortunate, but clearly true.

**Joe W:** I worked in college to support myself as a bartender in college clubs and bars for five years. Every year, I would come down with pneumonia, upper-respiratory-tract infections, and would catch a colds at least three times a year. I was out of breathe, could not play sports, and had terrible headaches from my customers' cigarette smoke. It has been over 10 years since I worked in a bar and I rarely catch a cold and have never had another upper-respiratory-track infections. I am 15 years older and my health is better than when I was younger, because I was not forced to smoke other people's smoke.

*Dennis S:* I have had to work as a Bartender and waiter before. I developed a cough, flem, and know that it damaged my lungs. Please help. Don't use the excuse "but they don't have to work there" ...we do. People who work in bars deserve the same rights to a safe, smokefree workplace as everyone else.

**Linda A:** My husband and I own a restaurant. My three children work with us and we have 12 employees. The decision to have a smoke free NYC should be one that focuses on the HEALTH of its workers not on the wealth of the tobacco companies. We all deserve to have the best chance of a long life with our families.

**Eddie S:** I worked for many years in a smoky bar and put up with the tremendous health hazards because of financial necessity. Luckily I am no longer in that position. Others are. Any attempt to pass a watered down version of the proposed bill will only serve to endanger the health of workers who because of financial necessity are forced to take jobs in these hazardous environments.

**Rare F:** Why should we have to work in a smoky environment while politicians and others enjoy the comforts of clean air? Should we die to make a living? Think of our constant aggravation of burning eyes, struggling to breathe and that awful taste in the mouth. Is this what is called double standard?

**Jeffrey B:** Having previously worked in restaurants and bars for years, I can unequivocally say that the discomfort experienced by the average non-smoking customer in these establishments is nothing compared to the unexplainable persistent cough, headache, burning sinuses and irritated eyes that workers can experience after long periods of exposure to smoke-filled workspaces.

**Anita F:** I work in a casino. The worst part of my job is the smoke. Some players blow it in my face deliberately when they lose, others are just thoughtless. At times I literally choke just to keep my job. I work with the hope of securing my retirement. My fear is that I won't live long enough to reap the rewards of my labor.

**Barbara L:** After 9 years of a successful and lucrative career as a musician, I was forced to give it all up due to chronic respiratory infections and bronchitis that I suffered from over years of breathing secondhand smoke in nightclubs and restaurants where I worked. This was a career I trained for my entire life. I have never smoked myself, yet I have developed asthma from breathing in secondhand smoke on the job

**Tracey P:** As a former waitress and hostess of several popular restaurants, I urge you to support legislation for a "smoke-free" environment. For all of the years I HAD to do it, I felt sick and exhausted and at times angry and depressed about even having to put myself in such a situation. I was literally sick every night going home, not to mention everything I owned smelled like poison. And that is exactly what it is - Poison.

**Mary S:** I work for a wonderful family, but they still allow smoking in the break room in their business. In order for me to use the ladies room, I must go through the break room. This is a dangerous situation, especially if you have to take your breaks in this room. Everyone deserves to breathe clean air while working.

**Lisa B:** When I was young I worked in a bar. At my physical checkup time, my doctor said to "quit smoking" because my lungs didn't look good. Well, I didn't smoke! I may still come down with a smoke related illness in my lifetime from those jobs which paid my way through nursing school. I had no choice but to work in places to afford a decent college.

**Evan D:** I was forced to give up lucrative work in the entertainment field due to inability/lack of desire to breathe other's toxins, (second hand cigarette smoke). I strongly favor smokefree workplace legislation.

**Patricia A:** I have been a smoker for nearly ten years. Moreover, I have worked in restaurants and bars filled with smoke. My own smoking habits disgust me. And what I loathe the most is that I am inflicting pain on people around me. I'll gladly give up smoking in bars, and so will other smokers. It's worth it.

**Alison J:** I have been a bartender in a nightclub for several years. Unfortunately I have suffered many negative consequences. At the end of a shift, my eyes are itchy, my skin is crawling, and I am congested. It takes a full day to recover. However, I need a job that is flexible, because I am also a local singer and performer. I've heard a lot of people argue if bartenders don't like the smoke, they can do something else,

but it's not that simple. It's not about people's right to smoke; it's about people's right to breathe.

**Richard T:** Am I a bad person because I am a waiter and bartender? What did I do that is so wrong that I must decide between having a decent paying job that I enjoy and substantially increasing my risk of cancer and lung disease? All I want is the same right to a safe, smokefree workplace that millions of other workers enjoy. People who work in bars, restaurants, and nightclubs are good people. We deserve a safe, healthy, smokefree workplace too.

**Sage B:** I am a waiter/bartender who has held jobs in restaurants for 14 years. I am highly resentful of secondhand smoke and feel people should not have that right to affect others with their addictions.

**Cynthia H:** I am an actor and work at temp jobs and restaurants when I'm not in a show. I suffer health issues from other people's smoke, such as sinus problems, soar throat, and headaches. Being trapped in a bar all night to make money is a miserable experience. It affects my health and my quality of performance as an actor.

**Donna M:** I was a waitress for many years while my babies were young, and then as a single parent I became a bartender to earn extra money at night. It became necessary for me to quit working, because I was sick all the time from the second-hand smoke.

**Bill Moriarity (president of Local 802 - Associated Musicians of Greater New York - which represents 10,000 professional musicians):** The health of all workers is equally important. Unfortunately, most of our members have the choice of either working in a smoke filled room or not working at all. No one should be allowed to make someone else sick.

**Ken W:** As a small club entertainer I have been deprived of employment because my body cannot tolerate smoke. Why do other workers deserve a smokefree workplace and not me?

**Gregory N:** I should have the right to work in a cancer-free environment. According to the NYC Department of Health, the average bartender breathes the equivalent of half a pack of cigarettes a night.

**Richard W:** At age forty two and employed full-time as a bartender at one of New York's top hotel's for the past seven years, I want to stay at my present job. Why should I have to give up one of the best jobs I've ever had?

**James D:** I have been a bartender for 17 years. I love my job, mostly because I love people and the freedom my job offers. The only thing I hate is the smoke. Cigarettes kill, period. Why are people permitted to kill me?

**Timmy C:** I'm a singer and musician who plays frequently in restaurants and bars. I care about my health and think it's dangerous and unfair that I should have to be subjected to a risk of cancer and heart disease just to ply my trade.

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