



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **POLL: Illinoisans Strongly Support New Statewide Smoking Ban**

Springfield, Ill. – June 21, 2007 – Illinois voters overwhelmingly approve of the new smoking ban expected to go into effect next January, according to the most recent polling conducted on behalf of the American Cancer Society.

The poll, conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research between May 29 and May 31, 2007, found that 68 percent of Illinois voters support the General Assembly's decision to implement a comprehensive statewide indoor smoking ban, while only 30 percent are opposed. In addition, voters vehemently oppose recent efforts by the casino industry to weaken the law by adding an exemption for riverboat casinos. Sixty two percent of Illinoisans oppose this effort.

“This poll confirms that the recent actions of our legislators in Springfield are not only good public policy, but are tremendously popular as well,” said Clement Rose, M.D., president of the American Cancer Society's Illinois Division. “These results are further encouragement to policymakers to resist pressure from casino owners who want to continue exposing the approximately 10,000 Illinois casino workers to cancer-causing secondhand smoke.”

Just weeks ago, opponents of SB 500, the Smoke-Free Illinois Act, brazenly attempted to pass legislation – even prior to the Governor signing the law -- that would exempt riverboat casinos from the ban.

“Whether you work in a casino, an office or a restaurant, everyone deserves the right to breathe clean, indoor air. This poll shows that Illinois voters understand this fundamental right loud and clear,” said Dr. Rose.

The poll shows support for the Smoke-Free Illinois Act cuts across party lines, with Democrats, Republicans and Independents favoring the bill. And the support is uncharacteristically intense – with 56 percent of the overall population registering “strong” support for a smoke-free Illinois.

“The American Cancer Society has been leading the effort for a smoke-free Illinois since 2005, and we have seen first hand the passion and desire of a majority of Illinoisans for this life-saving legislation,” said Dr. Rose. “The results of this survey show clearly that attempts by casino lobbyists, Big Tobacco and some legislators to undo or weaken statewide smoke-free efforts fly directly in the face of the demands of voters.”

. The Smoke-Free Illinois Act was passed by the General Assembly on May 1 and currently awaits the Governor’s signature. Governor Blagojevich and his representatives have publicly and repeatedly expressed his intent to “enthusiastically” sign the bill.

“The American Cancer Society was very pleased when Governor Blagojevich sent the director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, Dr. Eric Whitaker, to our 1,000 person rally in Springfield after SB 500 passed to announce the Governor’s intent to sign this bill,” said Dr. Rose. “We look forward to the day that the Governor signs this law as promised, and to the day that Illinois workers, residents and visitors in every city and town can breathe smoke-free air.”

The American Cancer Society is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by saving lives, diminishing suffering and preventing cancer through research, education, advocacy and service. The Illinois Division has more than 120,000 volunteers and staff fighting cancer in the state. For the most up-to-date cancer related information and to join the fight against cancer, call 800-ACS-2345 or visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

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