

News Journal

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Letters to the Editor

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OUR READERS' VIEWS

Readers

Wilmington riverfront made good impression on investors

The Christina riverfront was clearly the star of local pride during a recent Early Stage East Venture Capital Fair, the largest venture capital fair on the East Coast. More than 600 people attended, 90 percent of whom came from outside Delaware.

This year's participants consisted of financial and entrepreneurial luminaries from Wall Street to Washington, Silicon Valley to Israel. The common reaction to our riverfront was sheer excitement, surprise and awe.

We moved the venue to the Christina riverfront to highlight the uniqueness of the community, nestled in the middle of the East Coast's high-technology corridor. Our opening reception took place at the Juniper Bank building and on the Kalmar Nyckel docked out front. The conference resumed the next day at the First USA Riverfront Arts Center.

Many participants said they never expected Wilmington to have so much style. They cited the beauty and uniqueness of a state ship and the ease of strolling along the redeveloped riverfront to world-class venues after stepping off Amtrak trains.

The location was so well received that scores of participants ended up at the restaurants along the riverfront after the conference adjourned. We even noted a number of shopping bags full of tax-free purchases.

If we wish to continue to draw people from out of state and leave them with a positive impression, I hope that the Christina riverfront continues to be supported and integrated into tourism offerings, from the Brandywine Valley museums to world-class beach facilities to our south.

David J. Freschman

President, Delaware Innovation Fund

Wilmington

Turn out those who vote against the ban

I want to congratulate The News Journal for its editorial support for Senate Bill 99. It appears that state Rep. Bobby Quillen and Rep. Pam Thornberg want to ignore the silent majority (some 75 percent of the people) and introduce bills to either water down or delay the smoking ban.

I would suggest that since implementation isn't until Nov. 27, they should see what the real loss of revenue will be. The Legislature will be back next year and it can always change the law then, if needed.

This is a public health issue and the law is desperately needed. If the silent majority ends up losing, I hope people remember all of the representatives who caved in to casinos.

C. Edward Dahn

Bethany Beach

Smoking ban shows government cares

Just when my faith in government was restored with the passage of Senate Bill 99, greed reared its ugly head again. The passage of S.B. 99 was a milestone for the health of Delawareans. However, the self-induced panic of revenue-hungry executives and senators in the casino districts threaten the bill even before it has been implemented.

It is an affront to our collective conscience that the detailed revenue loss projection of only \$11.9 million reported by the Delaware Economic and Financial Advisory Council is met with skepticism, while the unscientific \$57 million polling estimate commissioned by Denis McGlynn is taken seriously by state legislators.

Studies have shown that the health-related cost associated with smoking exceeds both these estimates. Further, it is inconceivable to me that when a comprehensive study by the World Health Organization attributes greater cancer risks to smoking, including cancers of the stomach, liver, cervix, uterus, kidney and sinuses, some legislators have proposed scaling back the scope of the ban and others seek to delay it.

Let the bill stand in its present form and show our children that government actually does work for the health and well-being of people.

Michael J. Berster

Wilmington

No good reason to delay smoking ban

I strongly disagree with those who want to delay the ban on smoking in Delaware. We non-smokers have had to put up with the lack of consideration of smokers for too many years.

I have three children and enjoy going out for a nice meal. I usually find that when you request a seat in a no-smoking section, you have to wait longer to get a seat, and the air will inevitably circulate from the smoking section. No-smoking sections do not keep smoke out.

I'm glad to finally see some action from the public officials. If small businesses are worried, think again. They will still see many smokers return and see new business from people who do not want to be exposed to poor air. If people want to smoke and degrade their own health, let them do it in their own environment, their own car or house. Let non-smokers have the clean air they deserve.

Kris Rydland

Bear

Smoking is a danger and subject to ban

The obvious reason people go to restaurants, bowling alleys, bars, casinos and the like is to enjoy food, service, atmosphere, and camaraderie, not because they can smoke.

Senate Bill 99 asks for a simple behavior change on the part of people who choose to smoke: Smoke your cigarettes outside either before or after one goes indoors, or take a quick break to go outside to have a cigarette. It is not asking people to refrain from smoking for hours, as airlines have for years.

Smoking tobacco automatically pollutes the air of other people and raises the question of who gets protected in shared air space, especially indoors.

The year 2002 will be a memorable year for Delaware. At the end of the decade, we will ask ourselves, "Do you remember when a person could actually smoke inside a public building?" I hope by then there will be fewer people who will have to take it outside.

Rob Simmons

Landenberg, Pa.

State singles out smokers on 2 fronts

I am one of the 23 percent of Delawareans who smoke, and am dismayed and confused by Gov. Minner and the Legislature's recent actions.

Delaware broke new ground with a state-wide ban on indoor smoking. Second-hand smoke continues to be treated as public health threat No. 1, and a smoking ban was passed. Just a few days later, people clamored for changes, claiming the state needs ample time to look at the impact of the ban on the economy. Shouldn't this have been done to everyone's satisfaction before the vote?

In the same few days, Gov. Minner cancelled a cigarette tax increase, saying other money had been found for the budget and the tax wasn't necessary.

What's the real agenda here? Is the state trying to improve health for only some citizens and not others? To improve health if it suits the budget?

Am I the only one who has trouble understanding how the second-hand smoke is a top priority, to be eliminated to save lives, yet tax incentives to reduce smoking is just a budget issue to be callously shelved? Millions of health care dollars go to treat smoking-related ailments every year. But I've never seen an estimate of how much is spent to treat smokers vs. non-smokers. How many health care dollars are we really saving with this ban?

Even more disturbing, Delaware has been declared the most toxic state in the country, yet regulations and fines on chemical companies and polluters are routinely ignored.

Cheryl Yifrach

Bear

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