



Everything Jersey

Editorial: Princeton ready to hang 'No Smoking' sign on all town property

By [Times of Trenton Editorial Board](#)

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It's possible, perhaps probable, that before too long, [Princeton will prohibit smokers from lighting up anywhere on town property.](#)

Of course, smoking already is banned inside any public building in New Jersey. However, if Princeton officials approve the measure, it would be the first town in Mercer to extend the prohibition to all municipal property, town-owned public parks and outside pools, Times staffer Jon Offredo reported this week.

Chances are it will not be the last such measure. Anti-smoking efforts are taking form nationally, across the state and in our backyard. Mercer County Community College has, since January, had a smoke-free policy on its West Windsor and Trenton campuses, while Burlington County Community College banned smoking on its campus in 2007.

State lawmakers are taking it one step further as Assemblywomen Celeste Riley (D-Cumberland) and Connie Wagner (D-Bergen) propose a smoking ban as well as the use of smokeless tobacco on any campus — indoors or outdoors — in “any facility owned, leased, or controlled by” any public or private higher educational institution.

Considering what's been called an “epidemic” of tobacco use among young adults, college campuses are a logical place to target smoking — as well as offering smoking-cessation efforts along with the prohibitions. According the U.S. surgeon general, up to a third of college students smoke.

In Princeton, and on New Jersey's campuses, it's the right thing to do. Smokers are irritated by new laws further eroding the real estate where they can grab a quick smoke. Organizations such as New York

Citizens Lobbying Against Smoker Harassment contend these efforts are motivated by a zealous moral majority rather than legitimate health concerns.

But there can be no argument with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's determination that secondhand smoke consists of more than 7,000 chemicals, hundreds of them toxic and about 70 that are carcinogenic. There is no safe level of exposure.

The tobacco industry spends about \$20 million a day, a day (ital), to convince the world otherwise, but the annual death rate of 443,000 Americans directly related to smoking is a statistic even the most brilliant marketer cannot sugarcoat.

Smokers can style themselves as an oppressed minority, fearless libertarians lighting up against the darkening tide of government tyranny. But those rights fatally infringe on the rights of the 50,000 Americans who die each year due to secondhand smoke.

In establishing smoke-free environments, municipalities and colleges must allow sufficient time for these changes to take place, reinforcing them with the cessation tools and understanding most smokers will need to kick the habit — or at least curtail it while they're in public.

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