

# A bump on tobacco road

Society



In North Carolina, the governor may be the top public official, but for the past 200 years tobacco has been king. The state grows half of all the tobacco in the United States, and the original cash crop remains its economic backbone.

But beginning next month, North Carolina will be home to one of the nation's toughest youthsmokinglaws, with a ban on tobacco use in public schools. Most students can't smoke at school anyway, but the law applies to everyone on campus, year-round: parents in the stands at football games, maintenance crews in the school garage, teachers in the parking lot.

Getting the law passed was no simple feat in a state that still depends on people lighting up. North Carolina spends just 4 percent of its annual \$426 million of tobacco revenue on smoking prevention (less than half the minimum federal recommendation), and, at 35 cents, maintains one of the country's lowest cigarette taxes. In all, it took six years of local advocacy and the votes of all 115 of the state's school boards.

" It wasn't easy," says Mark Ezell, the state's tobacco-free-campus director. " I got called a Nazi a few times." Healthadvocates who want the state to go further are likely to be called a few more things.

Source: Philips, M. (2008) ' A Bump On Tobacco Road' Newsweek Online [online] available from [http://www. nesweek. com/id/147789](http://www.nesweek.com/id/147789)> [August 3, 2008]

The article I chose has the topic of smoking ban on schools on North Carolina. It is a landmark case on the massive efforts of different groups and individuals to educate the youth on the health risks of smoking. Although

there is already an existing law that prohibits smoking of the students in their school premises, the new law was tougher and stricter in sense.

For smoking is now a total ban on schools through out the state, not only for the youth but also for the teachers, employees or even ordinary visitors. This will ward off any attempts, influences or temptations of the youth to smoke by seeing their teachers or adults doing the same thing. This is also a daring step of the state authorities even though they will be having a tough battle against big multinational cigarette companies.

The article shows that smoking among the youth is a big problem. Cigarette companies usually on their marketing strategies targets teens, encouraging them to smoke on an early age. If they will be hooked on their youth on smoking, it will be difficult for them to quit smoking while growing, and this means a big sum of money for the cigarette companies. Moreover, smoking is usually introduced by peers on high schools. They usually try smoking because of curiosity, peer pressure or simply they just thought that it is 'cool' to smoke, like the Marlboro Man.

Companies and their marketing arms promote smoking as part of the 'youth culture', that smoking should be experienced by every youth and that smoking is a requisite for them to 'belong' on a group. Furthermore, even if smoking is prohibited for students on their school grounds, but visitors, teachers and other school staff are allowed to do so, the students will just simply question such policies.

Why they are not allowed to smoke inside school yet non-students are allowed. So it means, smoking are only banned inside, but allowed outside school premises.

And even worst, they will have the perception that when they reach adult age, they are already 'legally' allowed to smoke. Lastly, anti-smoking campaigns will be only effective if the people behind it will not only focus their efforts on lobbying to the proper authorities to pass ordinances or laws on prohibiting smoking on public places or schools. They should also intensify their campaign on educating not only the youth, but everybody, on the illnesses and ill-effects of cigarettes on our health.