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Praying state leaders clear air for healthier Hoosiers

With so much bad news, it is easy to overlook a place where our state is heading in the right direction: We are getting healthier by eliminating secondhand smoke in public places. But will state leaders shepherd us in the right direction?

Every day Indiana pastors, rabbis and other congregational leaders minister to the body as well as the soul, and ministering to a person is much harder when he or she has to inhale deadly chemicals present with secondhand smoke. Scientists say secondhand smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals, including 69 that cause cancer.

We are in a difficult economic time when everyone is particularly thankful for a job. This time also is a wake-up call for how difficult it is for someone to choose between a job and his or her health.

Across Indiana, many local leaders have passed smoke-free ordinances that make every workplace safe from secondhand smoke. The least, the last and the lost among us are the most likely Hoosiers to be exposed to secondhand smoke. We have a moral obligation to do better. We hope and pray state leaders will do what is right and act during this General Assembly's session to make every workplace in Indiana smoke-free.

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