



## Victory in Smokefree Dining Campaign in Los Angeles: Coalition Struggles to Find Unity

The Los Angeles City Council unanimously passed an outdoor dining no smoking ordinance on January 20, 2010. It was the latest in a string of victories for



LA advocates, but despite appearances, it was a difficult campaign. Participants were tested by divisions within the coalition and challenges in building relationships with key council offices.

Councilman Greig Smith, from the San Fernando Valley, introduced the ordinance in June, 2008 after he and his grandchild were overwhelmed with secondhand smoke on a restaurant patio. Before he introduced it, however, he consulted the California Restaurant Association and cigar groups and concluded that without exempting patios connected to bars and nightclubs and special private events at restaurants, his plan would face stiff opposition. He wanted the same unanimous support that the City Council had given to earlier tobacco control proposals, so, he introduced his measure with those exemptions built in. As John Lee, Legislative Deputy for Councilman Smith put it, "This was about evolution, not revolution. We believed this ordinance was a huge step for the second largest city in America to take, even with the compromises."

Until this campaign, Los Angeles advocates had always agreed on what policy to support. But almost immediately, the Smoke Free Outdoor Areas Workgroup divided between those who accepted the important but incremental progress offered by the proposal and those who believed that a public health coalition needed a stronger proposal without exemptions before it could offer support.

Many of the Workgroup participants were

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## Find, Follow, Communicate

You may already know this, but The Center is on [Twitter](#). Actually so are many of your colleagues like the [LLA PDA](#), [Los Angeles County Department of Health](#), [Ciggy Buttz](#) and the [American Lung Association in California](#). But what you may not know is that so are many local and statewide elected officials like [Los Angeles City Council Member Paul Krekorian](#), [San Francisco City Attorney Dennis Herrera](#) and [Assembly Member Alberto Torrico](#), to name a few.

So what does that mean to you? Well, first of all, following elected officials on Twitter helps you stay up to date with legislation they are introducing.

But, more importantly, if you find, follow and communicate with your elected officials on Twitter it may give you the opportunity to meet them face to face, communicate with them directly or learn something about their life that allows you to relate to them on a more personal



*Next time you meet with Assembly Member Torrico, ask how his son's team is doing.*

veterans of other tobacco control campaigns and understood how successful coalitions work with elected officials: the members are united, they speak with one voice, and they are pragmatic. In this case, the Workgroup's inability to wholeheartedly accept the compromise damaged relationships with the key council offices.

The Workgroup continued its public outreach despite their internal disagreements. Members recruited endorsements, [created a campaign website](#), and met with other council members to promote the idea of smoke free dining. But relationships with the council offices did not really improve until the Workgroup confronted its divisions head on.

In late October of 2009, after a year of disagreement, the Workgroup used a voting process, majority rule, to prioritize a set of proposals for strengthening the ordinance, narrowing the list to the top five proposals. Most importantly, the group agreed unanimously that everyone would support the measure that went to the Council floor even if none of their five proposals were included.

The Council committee accepted one of the Workgroup's proposals and eliminated an exemption allowing a restaurant to have two patios with one permitting smoking. On the day the full city council voted, 50 supporters turned out and a variety of speakers pushed for approval. The result was a unanimous vote passing the ordinance.

Later, Councilman Smith's office acknowledged the importance of another of the Workgroup's proposals which didn't get into the ordinance: requiring property owners to enforce the measure. Smith's office is suggesting to State legislators interested in making LA's law a model that any state law should include business owner responsibility for enforcement.

*This article was based on interviews with staff from Councilman Smith's office, and coalition members from the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, and the LA County Tobacco Control and Prevention Program.*

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*The Center for Tobacco Policy & Organizing assists local Prop 99 funded projects throughout the state meet policy objectives using proven community organizing strategies, and serves as a statewide and local tobacco policy resource. The Center is a project of the American Lung Association in California and is funded by the California Tobacco Control Program.*

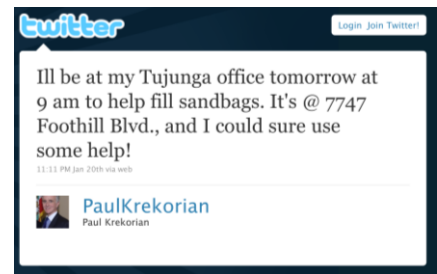
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level, all of which might help your campaign.

For example, send them a tweet, or re-tweet their pleas for help. The next time you are meeting with the official,

mention that you not only went to Tujunga to help fill sandbags but you also re-tweeted his plea for help or that your son also plays basketball. Twitter can give you a closer look at what an elected official is doing, on and off the job. This information can make your organization stand out the next time you invite your elected to an event, meeting or to sign on to a letter.



*Don't forget to mention that not only were you there, but that you re-tweeted this message to all of your followers.*



*Keep on the elected official's radar and try to get them to re-tweet info about your events.*

*To learn more about how to set up your own Twitter account, [click here](#) or call Erin Archer at 916-554-4864.*

*To find your elected officials go to [http://twitter.com/invitations/find\\_on\\_twitter](http://twitter.com/invitations/find_on_twitter) and search for their name.*

*The Center also has a list of legislators and local elected officials on Twitter on our wikipedia at <http://tobaccopolicy.wikispaces.com>*