

Thank you all for coming.

As you all know the ART coalition, Appeal to Reason and Tolerance, a coalition of Lawrence folks that are concerned about the recent actions of the City Commissioners, has been working to find a better option for some of the more extreme aspects of the current commission actions. (These are actions that have strayed into the areas of controlling business decisions on legal activities while attempting to make business owners responsible not only for the behavior of Lawrence citizens but also for the enforcement of those Ordinances)

ART has worked with Lawrence citizens, they have provided factual information to elected officials, city staff and community leaders, they have engaged in discussions to find common ground and they have been concerned with not only their own customers and businesses but with finding a way to address the concerns of both sides in a solution where all sides gain and no one is left out.

ART has also circulated a petition to overturn the Ordinance that established an extreme ban and made the business owners a victim of anyone smoking in their place by fining the owner instead of the perpetrator of the smoking violation. That petition was reviewed by the County Attorney to make sure it met the requirements and was circulated according to guidelines given to us by The County Clerk. That petition is before you with a total of over 5000 signatures of concerned citizens. We want to thank all who signed, which included many, many non- smokers who believe that some rights of the business owners have been infringed upon and even several who told us that they wanted some sort of ordinance but knew that there was a better way than the one recently passed. We applaud their participation and value each one's opinion.

In addition the group has been flooded with comments and requests from groups and individuals who wanted us to work out a compromise, a solution that would help all sides and not add unnecessary costs to the taxpayers (a Lawrence city election can cost 70,000 to 100,000 dollars). In fact the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce has asked all parties to work together for a solution; "The Lawrence Chamber of Commerce is aware of business impacts upon Chamber members as a result of the current smoking ordinance. These impacts reach

across business categories and have created unintended consequences. The Chamber urges affected parties and city officials to seek a compromise solution to this issue."

Just a few weeks ago the Coalition appeared at the Lawrence City Commission meeting with a compromise that addressed the stated concerns of the commissioners yet would still allow those business owners the opportunity to address the needs of their patrons. That this might involve extra costs, time, resources and sacrifices on the part of the businesses was understood and accepted as part of the process of compromise. This suggested solution would allow choice and still protect the quality of air of our city, not only in the hospitality establishments but everywhere in the city. It included a "floor" Air Quality level that all businesses must meet which could improve air quality immediately. We realize that this is a work in progress and we are encouraged by the individual City commissioner's comments that show they understand this has been a hardship to many and that they want to find a way to help as well as protect. We look forward to working with them and all others who want to work together to make Lawrence better than other communities that only seem to be able to point fingers or fight and declare winners and losers. We will perform the harder but more important work of finding common ground and building consensus among the diverse views and goals.

Even though this is the first successful referendum petition drive I can remember in Lawrence (in all my years here), the results from other communities around the country that have forced elections on these issues were mixed (in the past November election a majority of those communities that had the option of a compromise *voted for a compromise*) and have given us cause to work harder for a better solutions. These elections leave a divided and embittered community for years to come, they don't resolve those very issues and *we think Lawrence can do better and deserves better.*

Sometimes wise and principled individuals may find themselves in disagreement on plans of action, and the smoking ban issue is a grand example. We both want the same outcomes, responsible hospitality and healthy lifestyles. We both want moderation, we both want healthy citizens.

Diversity and responsibility are the values we embrace, and we think those are values that have made Lawrence great. The plan that the Commission has agreed to consider addresses these issues in multi-lateral ways, and allows us all to utilize options for creativity and innovation.

One of the premises by which we run our business is that we all live on the same planet, and it is very hard to kick people we don't like off the planet, and, when we are involved in conflict, we should try to act as if our goal is to not only solve the problem, but to prepare for the day we will live in peace with whom we are currently in disagreement.

In consideration of the above points, the Appeal to Reason and Tolerance Coalition has decided not to turn in this petition to the City Clerk today. We instead invite all concerned to join us in engaging in finding the common ground to achieve common goals together.

In a recent ethics forum held in Lawrence that brought many state and community leaders together with Michael Josephson, founder and president of the Los Angeles-based Josephson Institute of Ethics and a media commentator, author and ethics consultant, Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius told the gathered citizens

"It's all about 'what's best for me,' when it should be 'when one of us isn't doing well, then all of us aren't doing well,'" she said. "I really struggle with how to get back to that sense."

We need to all concern ourselves with the greater good of Lawrence to ensure all are protected and all prosper together.



MEMO

TO Phil Bradley, Appeal to Reason and Tolerance Coalition
FROM Lavern D. Squier, President and CEO
RE Chamber urges compromise solution
DATE 12/3/04



Out of concern for our members, we have issued the following statement to convey our concerns regarding this divisive community issue, and to promote further productive dialogue with respect to the impact on our members and the community.

"The Lawrence Chamber of Commerce is aware of business impacts upon Chamber members as a result of the current smoking ordinance. These impacts reach across business categories and have created unintended consequences. The Chamber urges affected parties and city officials to seek a compromise solution to this issue."