

2005–2015

**SMOKE
FREE**

10

**Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of
Rhode Island's Smoke Free Workplaces Act**



TOBACCO

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ISLAND

The Smoke Free Movement Begins...

The Smoke Free Schools Act
passes, 1992

East Greenwich adopts a smoke
free restaurants policy, 2003

“We did the education piece with allies like American Lung Association and American Cancer Society. Then we had to do a lot of lobbying. Flooding people’s phones, advocating, petitioning, writing to media.”

*—Bob Houghtaling, East Greenwich
Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force*

Cumberland starts
“Smoke Free Tuesdays”

Block Island is one of the first RI
communities to go Smoke Free

The Campaign for a Healthy RI Is Born



Thanks to funding from the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**
many organizations come together

Momentum builds...

Smoke free workplace legislation is introduced in 1998, and is filed every year until it passes in 2004

“Rhode Island banded together with other New England states in 2002 to fight for and win a cigarette tax increase. In 2003, Senator Susan Sosnowski introduced legislation in the Senate as Representative Dennigan introduced hers in the House.”

—Betty Harvey, former Tobacco Control Program Manager, RI Department of Health

**“It is impossible to underestimate the impact
of the advocates from the Campaign for a
Healthy Rhode Island.”**

*—Betty Harvey, former Tobacco Control Program
Manager, RI Department of Health*

**“How often do you get a chance to make
a meaningful impact on people’s lives?
The efforts were worthwhile.”**

*—Alison Buckser, Director,
Campaign for a Healthy Rhode Island*

“Dr. Patricia Nolan’s ability to deliver the science without exaggeration made her a powerful voice. When some Health Department Directors in other states held back, Dr. Nolan advocated everywhere and for anyone who wanted a smoke free environment.”

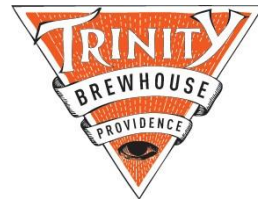
*—Betty Harvey, former Tobacco Control
Program Manager, RI Department of Health*

Massachusetts goes smoke free in 2004

**“It wasn’t a question of if, it was a question of when
Rhode Island was passing this bill.”**

*—Lori Fresina, formerly with the
American Cancer Society*

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Restaurant Pioneers



“You realize how ironic this is... we were striving to buy the freshest ingredients to sell to our customers, we would have fresh herbs flown in so that we could have the best cuisine and we spent a lot of effort. And then we served it in a carcinogenic cloud.”

—Bob Burke, Pot Au Feu

**What restaurant owners pay out of pocket
when they allow smoking so that
Big Tobacco can turn billion-dollar profits:**

Higher maintenance expenses

carpets, drapes, cloths, paintwork

Higher insurance premiums

fire, medical, workers comp, liability

High labor costs

absenteeism, productivity

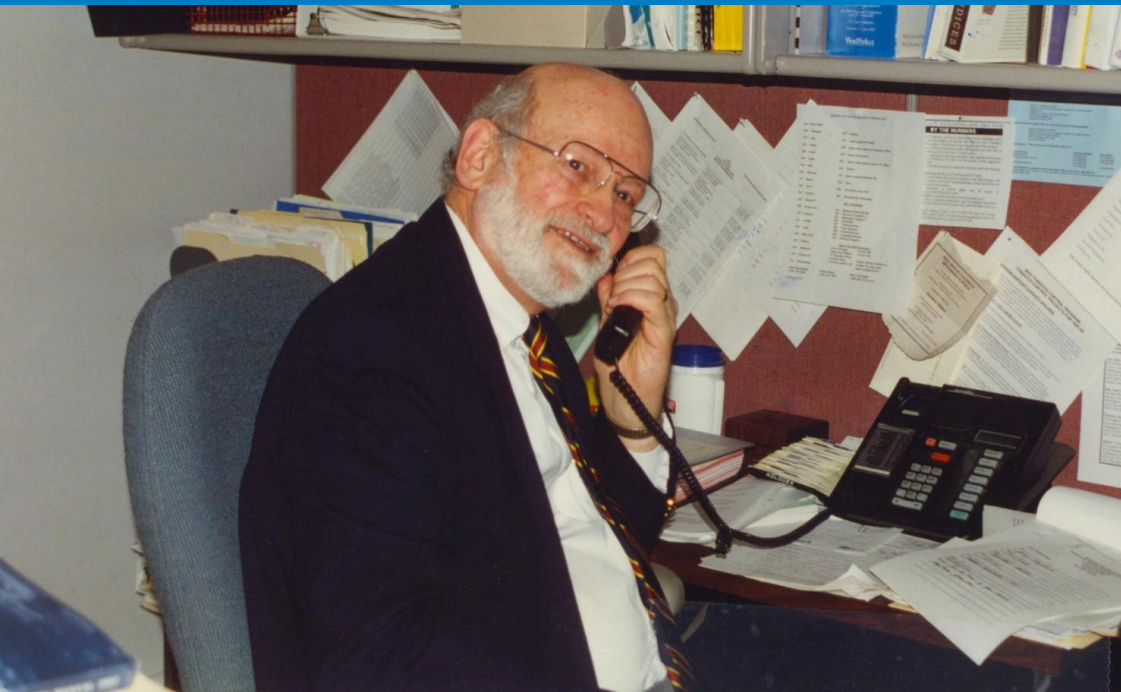
**“Our dining rooms have always been smoke free.
One evening I walked into the bar where a few
customers had lit cigarettes and I thought no one should
be exposed to that environment. The next day our whole
property—inside and outside—became smoke free. That
was several years before it became the law.”**

—Johanne Killeen, Al Forno

“[In restaurants] the smoke would waft over, the no-smoking area becoming almost useless. As the late Jerry Maldavir, a Cancer Society lobbyist, told me in 1997, ‘You can’t chlorinate half a pool.’”

“After long fight for smoking law,
air finally clears,” Providence Journal

—*M. Charles Bakst, February 27, 2005*



Jerry Maldavir
*American Cancer
Society, R.I.P.*

The Conversation Changes
from protecting the public
to protecting workers'
health and safety

**“We used a workplace argument;
protecting workers, not punishing smokers.”**

*—Dr. Patricia Nolan, Director,
RI Department of Health, 1995–2005*



**“If you don’t have your health,
you’re not going to be able to work.”**

*—George Nee, President,
Rhode Island AFL-CIO*

The Movement Gains Momentum



“I went into a restaurant and saw a pregnant waitress working there and asked if she would be one of our spokespeople. She didn’t want to lose her job but she talked to her boss and then became a spokesperson for us.”

*—Carol Hall Walker,
RI Department of Health*

“Senate President Bill Irons went to New York and told me how nice it was to go into restaurants and not smell cigarette smoke. He threw his full support behind the bill after talking to restaurant owners there and heard that business got better after the ban went into place.”

—State Senator Susan Sosnowski, bill sponsor

Big Tobacco's Fear of Smoke Free Laws

“Total prohibition of smoking in the workplace strongly affects tobacco industry volume. Smokers facing these restrictions consume 11% – 15% less than average and quit at a rate that is 84% higher than average”

—Phillip Morris report, 1992



Organizations Working Together

“Community coalitions were important, grassroots people were terrific, the medical society was helpful, and there were partnerships with lawmakers that were essential.

We were all rolling in the same direction.”

*—Lori Fresina, formerly with the
American Cancer Society*

Organizations Working Together

“It really was a movement, and that’s what made a difference in making us a healthier state.”

—Carol Hall Walker, RI Department of Health

Partners with Business Champions

“We could have waited for the state to do this, which I bet is going to happen anyway, but we wanted to do it on our own.”

—Joe Silvestri, Spumoni's Italian Seafood Restaurant, 2001



Partners with Business Champions

“The PawSox were smoke free champions. McCoy stadium went smoke free before the law; this impacted thousands of families and children. We did lots of different events there with them.”

—Carol Hall Walker,
Department of Health





Teamwork!

“Margaret Kane was one of the people who kept me in the fight. She worked tirelessly on this. Anytime we felt like here we go again, Margaret was endlessly hopeful and optimistic.”

—Bob Burke, Pot Au Feu

Teamwork!

“Throughout all we went through, Betty Harvey stood by us. She would be behind us in every situation.”

—Sally Mendzela, leader of the WORD campaign

Teamwork!

**“Art Handy was tremendous; kudos to him.
Betsy Dennigan was phenomenal, a real class act.
I can’t say enough about her.”**

*—Bob Houghtaling, East Greenwich
Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force*

Teamwork!

“Without Kitty Jerome and Lori Fresina, I am convinced this law wouldn’t have been passed. They were consistently giving us needed advice at the right times.”

*—Alison Buckser, Director: Campaign
for a Healthy Rhode Island*

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**Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of
Rhode Island's Smoke Free Workplaces Act**

Youth Involvement



“25 teenagers armed with handmade anti-smoking signs picketed Friendly’s Restaurant yesterday afternoon, urging the chain to ban smoking for the sake of its customers and workers...”

Youth Involvement



“Go smoke free! Go smoke free!
the youths chanted as they stood
outside the restaurant.”

—Seema Dixit,
RI Department of Health



David & Goliath
The Smoke Free Movement
vs
Big Tobacco

**Knock over
Big Tobacco**



“We were working against a highly financed and well-armed industry. It took us twenty years to chip away. They would go into communities and retain lawyers to testify on their behalf. On top of everything, money also went to people like the Hospitality Association; they were getting financed to protect all the rights for restaurateurs.”

**—Margaret Kane, formerly with the
American Lung Association**

Testifying at the State House

“I brought a water glass to the hearing and I said: there are 13 steps specified by the Department of Health that I have to follow to wash and restock this glass just so one person won’t get another person’s sniffles... But at the same time people can sit there and give cancer to other people and we don’t do anything about that.”

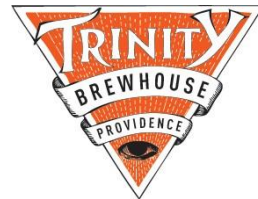
—Bob Burke, *Pot Au Feu*

A Turning Point



Vincent Mogera, a successful medical malpractice lawyer, sent out letters to hundreds of restaurants informing them that if they continued to smoke, he would seek to start a class action suit. It was becoming clearer that businesses would be held responsible for exposing their customers and employees to high risk situations.

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We Did it!

*The Public Health and Workplace
Safety Act passes in 2004*

Smoking is prohibited in all indoor workplaces and public places except casinos and gaming facilities, and smoking bars

**“72% of Rhode Islanders support
100% smoke free workplaces.”**

*—Patricia Nolan, Director, RI Health Department,
January 11, 2005*

“It was the most catalyzing campaign in tobacco control I have ever worked on.”

*—Lori Fresina, formerly with the
American Cancer Society*

The Providence Journal

March 1, 2005

CANCER SURVIVOR FUMES OVER SMOKING BILL

Believed to have acquired cancer through secondhand smoke, Ronald Lizotte plans to testify against legislation to expand exemptions to the state's new smoking ban.

BY KAREN LEE ZINER
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Ronald Lizotte's treatment for tongue cancer put him through hell. At its worst, he was nearly drowning in mucus, raw lesions pocked his tongue and throat, and "swallowing anything was like consuming fire and glass."

But Lizotte had never smoked, which made him wonder how he had acquired squamous cell carcinoma of the tongue, otherwise known as "smoker's tumor."

Lizotte's doctors suspect secondhand smoke, from his

father's two-to-three-pack-a-day habit. As this 56-year-old life-insurance salesman says, "This is what can happen to innocent bystanders."

The Cranston resident was diagnosed with cancer in 1999 and this month celebrates his five-year anniversary of being cancer-free.

He plans to testify in opposition to legislation that would create new exemptions to the smoking ban that takes effect tonight

SEE **SMOKING, A7**



JOURNAL PHOTO / GRETCHEN ERTL

"It makes me angry to know that people are not worried about lives," Ronald Lizotte, of Cranston, says of the House bill to roll back the smoking ban.

**“It makes me angry to know that
people are not worried about lives.”**

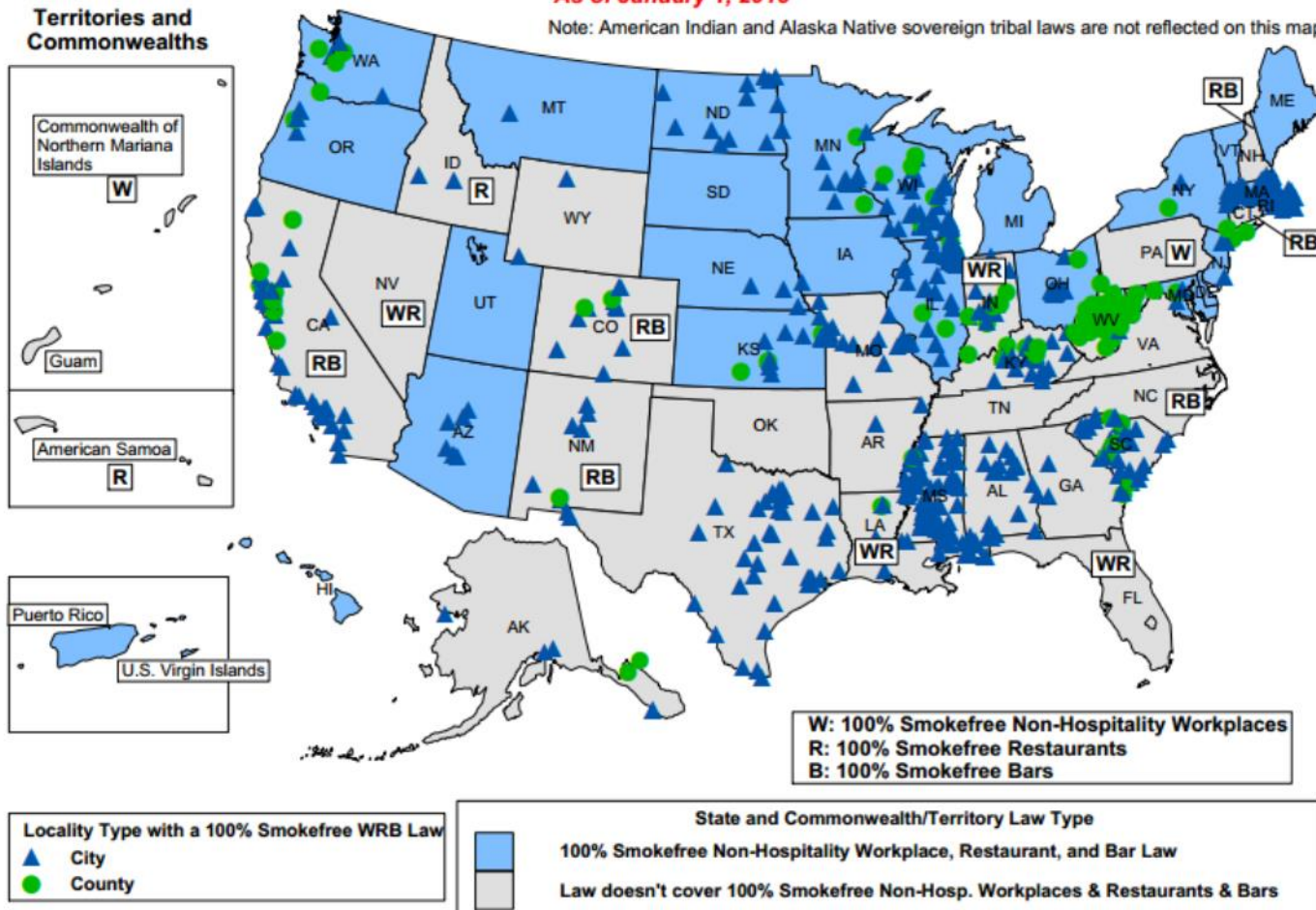
—Ron Lizotte

Additional exemptions to the
smoke free law were defeated

We're #7!

Rhode Island became the 7th
State to enact a Smoke Free Law

Note: American Indian and Alaska Native sovereign tribal laws are not reflected on this map.



March 1, 2005

**Public Health and Workplace
Safety Act Takes Effect**

**“As the seventh state in the United States to adopt
this life-saving legislation, Rhode Island is once
again in the forefront of public health
accomplishment.”**

*—Patricia Nolan, former Director,
RI Department of Health*

“Miriam Plitt and I were invited to meet Representative Paul Crowley at his family’s restaurant, La Forge Casino in Newport, shortly after the law passed. His staff cleaned the woodwork and the walls of the restaurant and this yellowish-brownish ‘gunk’ streamed down—the residue from all those years of secondhand smoke.”

*—Nicholas Oliver, formerly with the
American Heart Association*

THIRTEEN YEARS IN THE MAKING

Betty Harvey

“As a friend said to me recently, ‘Just think. If you never do anything else in your life, you will be in the history books for your work in tobacco control.’”

*—Betty Harvey, former Tobacco Control
Program Manager, RI Department of Health*



“In my opinion, this is my greatest achievement. We really turned the tide against a corporate predator. We have protected so many lives from this product.”

—Carol Hall Walker, RI Department of Health

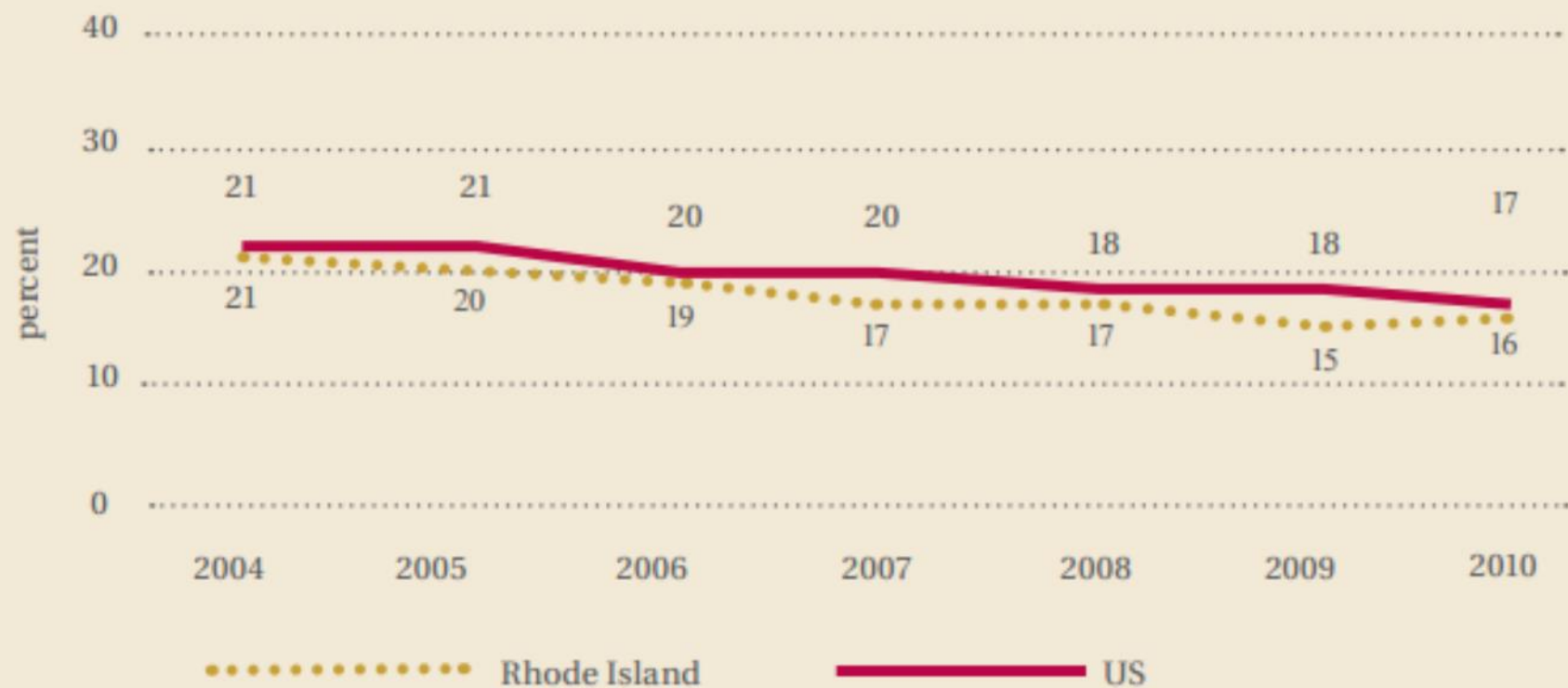
“It was very hard to change the culture. It was a health and safety issue versus personal freedom. The effects can take a long time, so people don’t realize they are sick because they were exposed to secondhand smoke. It’s hard to show causation, and we needed a lot of research to get the average person to think about it seriously.”

*—Maureen Glynn, former Assistant Attorney
General & Healthcare Advocate*

“Workers and the public are breathing easier throughout the Ocean State, and the law has had a significant impact on public health.”

—Americans for Nonsmokers’ Rights, 2010

Figure 4. National and Rhode Island trends in the percentage of adult cigarette smokers aged ≥ 18 , 2004-2010¹



New Research in *AJPH* on Secondhand
Smoke in Bars and Restaurants
Discovers Nonsmoking Workers
Immediately Absorb Potent Carcinogen

**“The study showed improved indoor air quality
with a 300% reduction in carcinogens.”**

*—Seema Dixit, former Tobacco Control
Manager, RI Department of Health*

“The fact that getting people to remove cigarette smoke from the workplace can reduce the incidence of heart attacks by 10-15% is remarkable. I don’t know of any other measure in the entire field of medicine or public health that can have that kind of impact with something as simple as a governor signing his or her name”

*—Ken Warner, Professor, Former Dean,
University of Michigan, School of Public Health*

In 2010, Rhode Island had the 17th lowest adult smoking rate in the US

“Every time I see one of the no-smoking posters in restaurants, I think to myself, we did that. It was a coordinated, grassroots effort showing how important this public health change would be to Rhode Islanders. I get to see this everyday when I walk into restaurants and know that the workers and customers inside there are healthier than they would have been if smoking had still been allowed.”

*—Marti Rosenberg, formerly with
Ocean State Action*

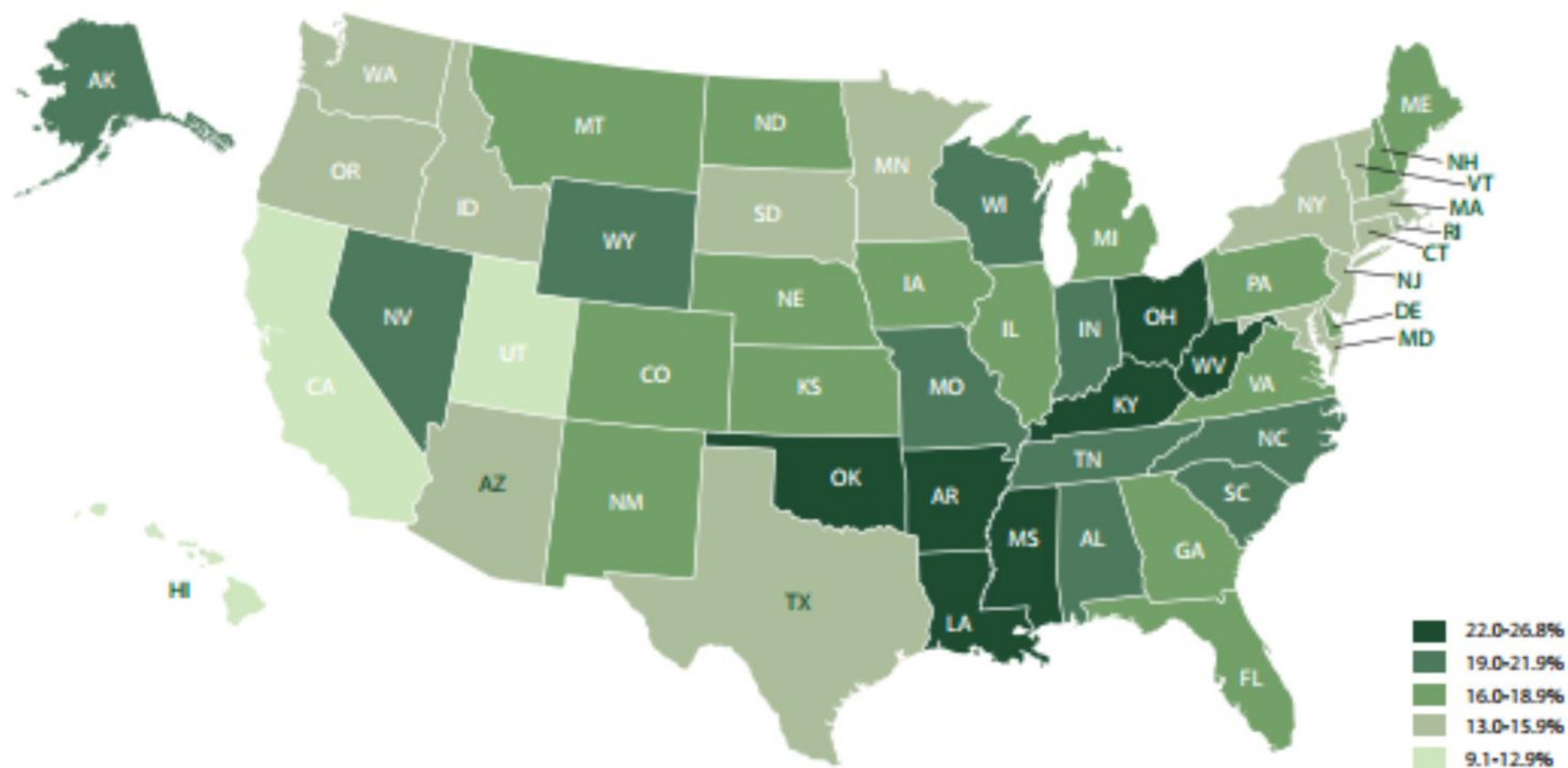
On 10th anniversary of smoking ban, advocates push ahead



ABOVE: In 2002, children, including Ryan Andrews, an eighth-grader at John F. Deering Middle School in West Warwick, were at a State House anti-smoking rally, pushing for restrictions on smoking in public places. THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL FILES

LEFT: Anti-smoking advocates film a Department of Health commercial announcing that Rhode Island's smoke-free law will take effect on March 1, 2005. THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL/JOHN FREIDAH

Adult smoking prevalence by state



“Give my congratulations to everyone involved for the hard work that was done to make sure the law didn’t get lost and it was passed. And thank goodness for this, because to this day there are states in our country that don’t have a smoke free law.”

*—Kitty Jerome, Smokeless States
Regional Grant Liaison Officer*

In Memoriam

Betty Harvey

*Tobacco Control Program
Manager, RI Department of Health*

Judith Rae Miller

*Tobacco Control Program
Manager, RI Department of Health*

Jerry Maldavir

American Cancer Society

**State Representative
Paul Crowley**

Ben Mondor

PawSox

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