



# Passage of Fire Safe Cigarette Legislation in NC

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# Presenter Disclosures

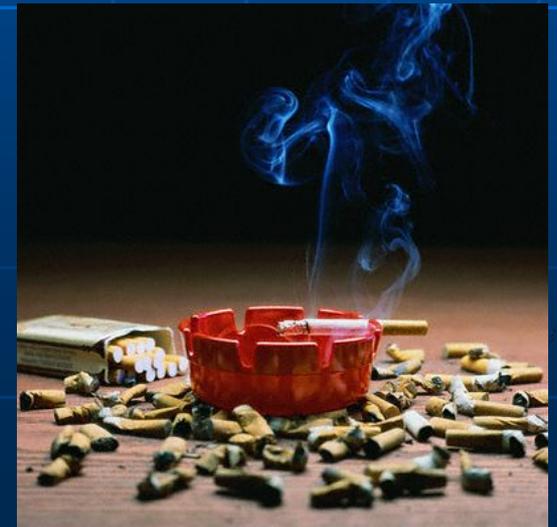
**Anna McCullough**

**(1) The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:**

**No relationships to disclose**

# Impact of Smoking Related Fires

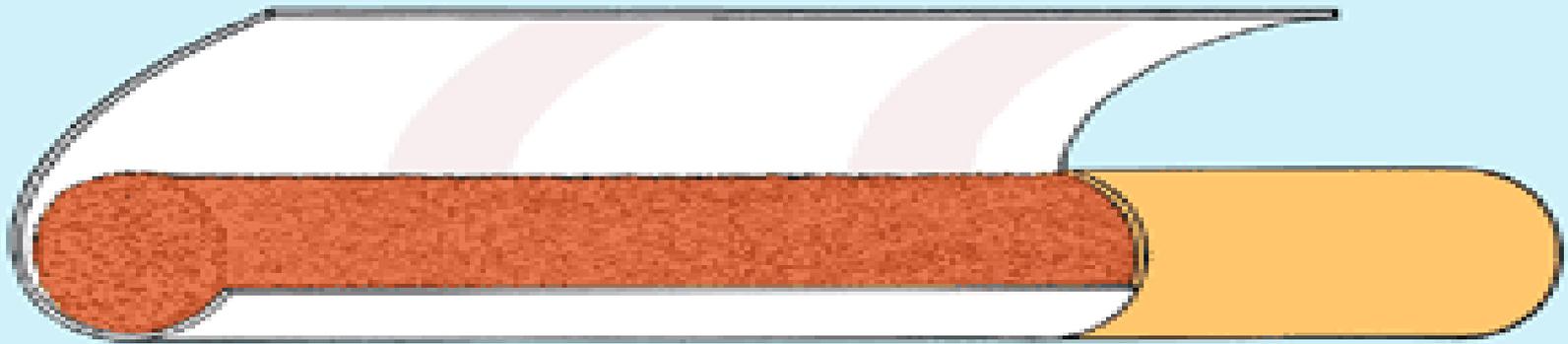
- Smoking related fires account for:<sup>2,3</sup>
  - Up to 30% of all fire fatalities
  - 22% higher property loss
- Between 2000 and 2006, hundreds of smoking related fires and deaths in North Carolina



# Fire Safe Cigarettes

- Less porous paper slows the burn rate<sup>4</sup>
- 2006 performance standard<sup>5</sup>

If a fire-safe cigarette is left unattended, the burning tobacco will reach one of these banded "speed bumps" and self-extinguish.





# Federal Action<sup>5,7</sup>

- 1974: Senate effort defeated by tobacco lobby
- 1979/1980: House and Senate bills introduced
- 1984: Safe Cigarette Act signed into law
  - Technological Study Group
  - Safeguard for state work
- 1987: Fire Safe Cigarette Act
  - Standardized method to test fire safety



# Tobacco Industry Action<sup>1</sup>

- Industry publicly argued that:
  - Link between cigarettes and fatal fires only “public perception”
  - Manufacturing fire safe cigarettes not feasible
  - Fire safe cigarettes not acceptable to consumers
  - Fire safe measures increase toxicity
  - Accurate testing not possible
- Prevented definitive federal action

# State Action

- 1980: State legislative efforts begin<sup>5</sup>
- 2000: New York requires all cigarettes to be fire safe by 2003<sup>5</sup>
- 2007: North Carolina moves forward



# North Carolina: A Tobacco State

- Top tobacco producing state in U.S.<sup>9</sup>
- 2007: \$587 million farm income; 255,000 tobacco related jobs<sup>9</sup>
- RJ Reynolds and Lorillard headquarters in Winston Salem, NC
- No comprehensive clean indoor air law
- Low excise tax
- 100% Tobacco Free Schools legislation passed in 2007





# 1996 UNC Fraternity House Fire



# North Carolina Fire Safe Cigarette Action

- 1997: Legislation first proposed
- 2007:
  - Public attention to other smoking related fires
  - Coalition development
  - Legislation proposed and passed

## **Join the march to fire-safe cigarettes**

**ADAM O. GOLDSTEIN AND AYSHA AKHTAR**

Fires that destroy people and homes, life and property and physical and mental health are a stark reminder of the difference between injuries and accidents. Injuries are frequently preventable, while accidents often are not.

The common denominator underlying recent fires in the Triangle, and many others over the last decade (including one that killed two N.C. State University students two years ago and another that took the lives of five UNC-Chapel Hill students) is a cigarette.

Cigarettes are the No. 1 cause of fatal residential fires in the nation. Cigarette fires kill more than 800 people and injure over 25,000 annually. Many of those injured and killed are children or the elderly, including nonsmokers. Cigarette fires cause 5 percent of Burn Foundation registry admissions and almost 50 percent

# North Carolina Coalition for Fire-Safe Cigarettes

- ❑ Formed in January 2007
- ❑ Common goal to pass fire safe cigarette legislation
- ❑ Coordinated by NC Jaycee Burn Center at UNC Healthcare and UNC School of Medicine
- ❑ Diverse membership group



UNC  
HEALTH CARE

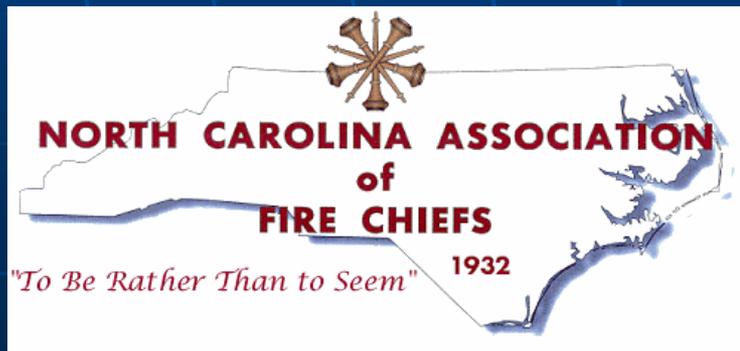
North Carolina  
**COALITION**  
for **FIRE-SAFE**  
**CIGARETTES**



UNC  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

# NC Coalition Takes Action – Early 2007

- Expanded coalition membership
- Collaborated with supportive state representatives to craft legislation
- Partners worked to build support:
  - Data gathered
  - Website developed
  - Opinion pieces published



# Coalition Strategy

- Grassroots education efforts
- Frequent educational meetings with legislators
- Coalition representatives at every subcommittee hearing
- NC State Firemen's Association members in full dress at every meeting





# Legislative Process

- Filed April 2007
- Jurisdiction moved from Agriculture to Insurance
- Passed and signed into law August 2007
- Challenges
  - Definition of cigarette
  - Economic arguments
  - Industry argued for national legislation

# Coalition Achievements

- Cigarettes regulated
- Reductions in morbidity, mortality, and economic costs expected
- New partnerships formed



State of North Carolina  
Office of the Governor

*Michael F. Easley*  
Governor

Release: IMMEDIATE  
Date: 8/24/2007

Contact: Seth Effron  
Phone: (919) 733-5612

**GOV. EASLEY SIGNS BILL TO PREVENT CIGARETTE-RELATED FIRES**  
*New Law Requires All Cigarettes Be Self-Extinguishing To Save Lives*

**Raleigh** - Gov. Mike Easley today signed into law House Bill 1785: "An act to require cigarette fire safety by adopting a cigarette fire-safety standard." The new law requires that cigarettes sold in North Carolina be self-extinguishing in an effort to reduce the number of smoking-related fires and home-fire deaths.

"Cigarettes are the leading cause of deaths from fires in North Carolina," said Easley. "By making the change to self-extinguishing cigarettes, it is estimated that as many as 50 fire-related deaths in our state could be prevented each year."

Between 2001 and 2006 there were 2,916 cigarette-related fires in North Carolina. Advocates say the self-extinguishing cigarettes could save three of every four cigarette-related fire deaths. In New York state, the first to adopt a "fire-safe" cigarette law, cigarette-related fire deaths dropped from a high of 44 in 2001 to 29 in 2005 after the law took effect.



# Remaining Challenges

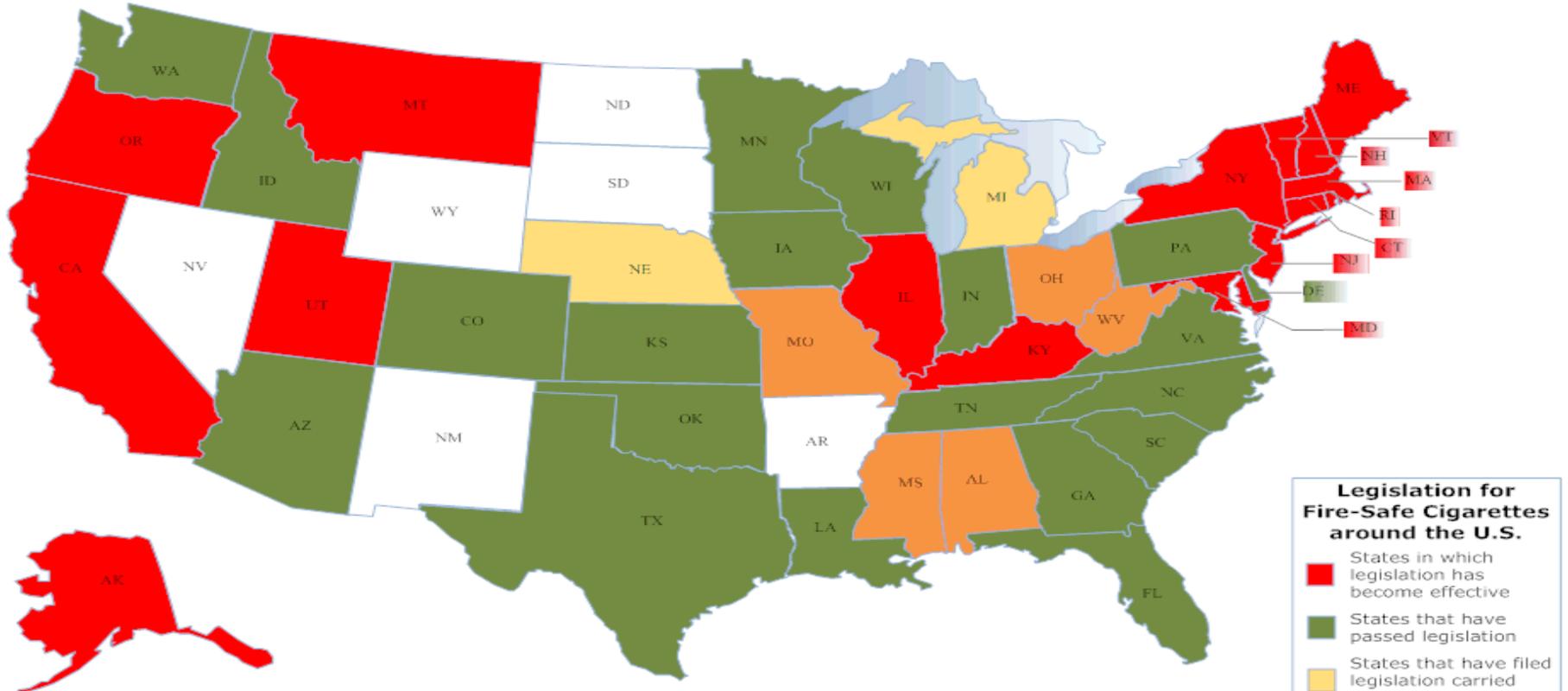
- Implementation delayed until January 1, 2010
- Some smoking materials exempt from requirement
- Meeting safety standards
- Future tobacco control legislation

# Where are we now?

www.firesafecigarettes.org

COALITION for FIRE-SAFE CIGARETTES™

The time is now.



**Legislation for Fire-Safe Cigarettes around the U.S.**

- States in which legislation has become effective
- States that have passed legislation
- States that have filed legislation carried over from 2007
- States that have filed legislation in 2008
- States that have not yet filed legislation

81.5% of the U.S. population is now or soon will be better protected from cigarette fires thanks to state passage of fire-safe cigarette legislation.

In Canada, fire-safe cigarettes are required nationwide using the New York standard.

**Click on any state to learn more.**



# Lingering Questions

- How to achieve fire safety standards for exempted smoking materials?
- Is litigation around cigarette related fires an appropriate strategy for future action?
- What does change in industry attitude to fire-safe legislation signify?



# Lessons Learned

- Legislation can happen quickly
- Strategic assignment of oversight is critical
- Non-traditional partners build strong coalitions
- Framing opens the door to new partnerships

# References

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