



January 5, 2023

Philip D. Murphy
Governor
State of New Jersey
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Murphy,

We write as longtime Atlantic City casino table games dealers and the co-founders and co-leaders of Casino Employees Against Smoking Effects (CEASE). Ever since indoor smoking returned to our workplaces on July 4, 2021, we have been fighting to protect our health by closing the casino smoking loophole in New Jersey law that gives the casinos a special exemption that no other business receives.

When you deliver your State of the State address on Tuesday, we are asking that you call on legislative leaders to send bipartisan legislation to close the casino smoking loophole to your desk by April 15. This date marks 17 years since the Clean Indoor Air Act took effect for most indoor workplaces – except for casinos. This makes us essentially the only group of workers in the state forced to choose between our health and a paycheck.

The state of our health is poor, and it's past time for the state to address it. We must feed our families and pay the bills, therefore we must also breathe the dangerous secondhand smoke being blown into our faces for eight hours a day. As a result, too many of us have been dealt diagnoses of cancer, heart disease, asthma and more. We've had to breathe this poison through pregnancies, while receiving treatment for cancer, and while wondering what exactly is happening to our health as yet another smoker lights up three feet in front of us, not giving a damn about our well-being.

We are grateful for your support of our fight. You have spoken out repeatedly in favor of legislation that is being co-sponsored by more than half of all members of both legislative chambers. Most recently, in September 2022, you [said](#): "I have said if that bill gets on my desk, I will sign it...at the end of the day, we will still get good business. Atlantic City is an American

gem. We've got the ocean and the other competitors don't. And this is the right thing for our respective health."

In the Senate, 23 of 40 senators are co-sponsoring S264. In the Assembly, 51 of 80 assemblymembers are co-sponsoring A2151 – including a majority of South Jersey Assembly Democrats. Most members of both chambers' health committees are also on board. The only remaining hurdle is leadership. We need your help to convince them to act. You all have the power to save lives by urging action on a popular bill that [most New Jerseyans support](#). Not only is closing the casino smoking loophole the right thing to do, it's also politically popular!

Further, a recent [report from Las Vegas-based C3 Gaming](#) finds "that banning smoking no longer causes a dramatic drop in gaming revenue. In fact, non-smoking properties appear to be performing better than their counterparts that continue to allow smoking." The report also noted, critically, that, "Should the New Jersey Legislature close the smoking loophole and prohibit smoking in Atlantic City casinos, gamblers from NY, NJ, and eastern PA will have only four options if they want to gamble in a smoking environment and none of them offers the same gaming/entertainment experience as Atlantic City."

The casinos are stalling and will always find a reason for why "now is not the right time." Enough already. As we begin 2023 and the 17th year since legislators first created the casino smoking loophole, it's long past time to prioritize the health of thousands of casino workers in Atlantic City who deserve the same healthy workplace as every other New Jersey employee. Please use your State of the State on Tuesday to help us finally get this done.

Sincerely,

Nicole Vitola, co-founder and co-leader of CEASE
Pete Naccarelli, co-founder and co-leader of CEASE
Lamont White, co-founder and co-leader of CEASE