



Statement by David R. Jones, Esq.
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on Extending Smoke-Free Protection to City Parks and Beaches
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Earlier this month, the City Council voted overwhelmingly – 36 to 12 - to ban smoking outdoors in city parks, on city beaches, and in pedestrian plazas. The effort was spearheaded by the New York City Coalition for a Smoke-Free City, which included among its members the Community Service Society. As an organization dedicated to extending health benefits to all New Yorkers, we celebrate this victory for a healthier city. And we commend Mayor Bloomberg and the 36 Council members who saw the bill through to law.

There was some criticism of the legislation, including an editorial in *The New York Times* entitled “Too Much of a Good Thing.” Apparently, some people think that it is permissible for government to ban smoking in private establishments such as restaurants, but not in public places where the general population would benefit. It is an argument that makes no sense.

We know from medical research that non-smokers who breathe in secondhand smoke take in nicotine and other toxic chemicals just like smokers. Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at an increased risk of acute respiratory infections and severe asthma. Scientific evidence shows that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Given these facts, New York is a more livable city with the extension of smoke-free protections to our public places.