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# Freedom to Choose

## (Scotland)

**Newsletter no. 2 of Freedom to Choose Scotland, [www.freedom2choose.co.uk](http://www.freedom2choose.co.uk)**

### **SCOTTISH PETITIONS TO BE HEARD 26 JUNE**

Scottish petitions against the smoking ban will come before the petitions committee on Tuesday 26 June, in a single hearing, at 2 pm. The petitions are likely to be referred to the Health Committee. Organizers are not invited to present evidence at this stage. There will be live Internet coverage, and seats are available in the public gallery.

### **WESTMINSTER GOVERNMENT CHALLENGED OVER SMOKING BAN**

On Thursday 14 June Freedom to choose UK presented a letter of intent to health secretary Patricia Hewitt. Unless the Government replies within 14 days the case will go to the High Court. We eagerly await the outcome. The struggle continues. VIVE LA RESISTANCE!

### **WHOSE COUNTRY IS IT ANYWAY?**

When you went to the polling station in May, which parties did you see represented? Labour, Lib Dems, Conservative, SNP, Publicans, etc? What about the most recent Westminster election? More of the same, no doubt.

Did you see a party called ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) represented there? Did you vote for ASH? Speaking personally, this writer can honestly say he didn't see them represented, and – going out on a limb perhaps – he'd be confident that nobody else did either.

So what?

Here's what ...

'... we will let the ban settle down, then we will go for the outside areas, and stop smoking within a certain distance of doors and windows' (Sir John Britton, ASH, News 24, 17 June 2007).

We the electorate voted in the governments in Westminster and Holyrood, thus giving them a mandate to enact legislation that has been passed in parliament. Who gave ASH the right to put forward public policy manifestos on such a scale?

The issue is not the rights and wrongs of smoking. It is that our elected representatives are in the pockets of unelected lobbyists. The danger posed to all of us, whether we smoke or not, is that democracy is being undermined ... the system of government that our leaders seek to export to Iraq and other parts of the world. Thousands of people, civilians and military personnel, are dying in our bid to spread 'democracy' ...

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The vital foundation of democracy is that the executive and legislature should be accountable to the electorate. ASH is neither elected by us nor is it accountable to us, yet it publishes a 'MANIFESTO' and blatantly tells the nation on the BBC about ITS plans to extend the smoking bans. This is a development none of us can ignore. We must all ask the question: *Who is running our country?*

### **PASSIVE SMOKING – the facts?**

'**Passive smoke DOES cause lung cancer**', ran the headline of a WHO press release in 1998 (*Investors' Business Daily*, 8 April). Many people had little trouble accepting this and smokers have since felt much guilt about indulging their habit in the company of non-smokers.

However the press release concerned a study commissioned by WHO into environmental tobacco smoke (ETS). Actually the study found NO significant relationship between ETS and lung cancer. So why the dramatic headline? Also, on 8 March 1998, the *Sunday Telegraph* published a report entitled '**Passive smoking doesn't cause cancer – official**' which opens thus: 'The world's leading health organization has withheld from publication a study which shows that not only might there be no link between passive smoking and lung cancer but that it could even have a protective effect'. The paper was reported to the Press Complaints Commission by ... you guessed it ... ASH. Happily, the PCC threw out the complaint.

The Health and Safety Executive (the body responsible for workers' safety) reached a similar conclusion, in OC 255/15, 7 August 2006 ('In essence, the HSE cannot produce epidemiological evidence to link [second hand smoke] to the raised risk of contracting specific diseases'). Yet the smoking ban in Scotland was brought in to protect workers.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>WARNING!</b> <b>LISTENING TO ASH IS</b> <b>HARMFUL TO YOU AND</b> <b>OTHERS AROUND YOU</b></p>
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### **A GLOBAL ISSUE**

Between 1999 and 2005, the Scottish Executive donated £1.7 million to ASH in direct funding. But the power of ASH is not simply a Scottish or even UK issue. ASH has active, and wealthy, offices in the States. Europe is also being lobbied by tobacco control agencies.

### **BOLTON SMOKE-IN, 30 JUNE & 1 JULY**

**A two-day protest event over the weekend is planned at the Swan, Bolton. Music, entertainment and a warm welcome guaranteed – the Accrington Pipe Band will start proceedings on Sunday 1 July at around 2 pm to honor the Scottish visitors! Please come if you possibly can and help defy this rotten ban!**

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