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West Lafayette Residents Speak Out Against Smoking Ban

(West Lafayette, Ind.) – West Lafayette area residents, including many Purdue students, have begun speaking out against the Smoking Ban recently passed by the Common Council.

Purdue student Kris Knigga has developed a tool to help them let the council know how they feel. Using his knowledge of Web site development, he wrote a script that will automatically send an email to the mayor and each member of the council on behalf of any West Lafayette area resident.

According to Knigga, the response to his online effort has been overwhelmingly positive. The word of his Web site has passed by word-of-mouth, or perhaps it would be better to say by word-of-keyboard, and over 85 people have already participated.

When a Web user goes to Knigga's page, they are shown a sample letter of what will be sent to the city government. By supplying their name, a valid email address and a West Lafayette street address the Web script automatically generates and sends the email.

This is the latest example in a growing trend of online activism. The movement gained widespread recognition in the 2004 presidential campaign when candidates used blogs to make themselves more accessible to the public and Web scripts so that users could easily email their friends about the site.

Knigga hopes that his online effort will help to change council members' minds regarding the anti-smoking law that they passed. "Councilor Plomin said that part of the reason he supported the [smoking] ban was because of emails he received from Purdue students," Knigga said. "Those emails were organized by anti-smoking advocates, so I figured I would just do the same thing."

Recent Purdue graduate, Chris Meador, participated in the effort because he believes that the government does not have the authority to ban smoking in privately owned establishments. "To me this is not a matter of public safety but of the disintegration of personal freedom and responsibility," said Meador.

A sample of the letter and replies that City government leaders have sent regarding it are available on Knigga's Web site: <http://www.knigga.com/smokingban/>

For more Information:

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Over 85 sets of emails have already been sent through the online script:

<http://www.knigga.com/smokingban/>

Through his Web site, Kris Knigga encourages opponents of the West Lafayette Smoking Ban to participate in his online effort.