
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 415

AN ACT CONCERNING STATE OVERSIGHT OVER HOOKAH LOUNGES.

SUMMARY:

This bill prohibits smoking in hookah lounges, except for those in existence before December 31, 2010, under certain conditions. It (1) defines a “hookah lounge,” (2) redefines smoking to include water pipes and hookahs, and (3) requires the Department of Public Health (DPH) to adopt regulations on hookah lounges. It also makes technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

HOOKAH LOUNGES

Definitions

The bill defines “hookah lounge” as a space, in a suitable and permanent building, kept, used, maintained, advertised, and held out as a place where hookahs or water pipes are regularly made available to the public. It also redefines “smoke” or “smoking” as used in the state’s no smoking law to include the lighting or carrying of a water pipe or hookah.

Hookah Lounges Currently Operating

Under the bill, any hookah lounge operating before December 31, 2010, can continue to operate if (1) it does not expand its size or change location from that of December 31, 2010, and (2) complies with DPH regulations on hookah lounges. The bill defines “operating” as leasing, renting, or owning space, in a suitable and permanent building, open according to a valid certificate of occupancy, used, maintained, advertised, and held out as a place where hookahs or water pipes are regularly made available to the public.

Regulations

DPH must adopt regulations, by July 1, 2013, concerning the operation of hookah lounges to protect the health and safety of their patrons.

BACKGROUND

Hookahs

A “hookah” is a water pipe used to smoke “shisha,” a combination of tobacco and fruit or vegetable that is heated and the smoke is filtered through water. The hookah consists of a head, body, water bowl, and hose. The tobacco or shisha is heated usually using charcoal.

Related Bill

SB 948, favorably reported by the Public Health Committee on March 28, bans smoking in the workplace regardless of the number of employees in the business facility.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 19 Nay 9 (04/01/2011)