# Atlantic City Casino Workers Seek Smoking Ban in Legal Battle



In Trenton, New Jersey, Atlantic City casino workers have requested a judicial ban on smoking within casino premises, contending that the current allowance harms their health. This issue was brought to Superior Court Judge Patrick Bartels who, as of the hearing on Monday, had yet to make a decision but committed to a swift resolution.

The workers, represented by attorney Nancy Erika Smith and organized by the United Auto Workers union, argue that the tolerated smoking in 25% of the casino floor—though non-contiguous—pervades most areas, exposing them to second-hand smoke linked to severe health issues such as bronchitis, asthma, and cancer.

In opposition, the state, represented by Deputy Attorney General Robert McGuire, argued that a smoking ban could imperil significant revenue derived from the casinos, specifically $526 million allocated to senior and disabled programs in the upcoming fiscal year. This revenue originates from the 8% of casino earnings deposited into the state’s Casino Revenue Fund.

Despite these economic concerns, some studies and precedent cases cited by the plaintiffs suggest that casinos might not suffer financially from a smoking ban. The ongoing legal battle also highlights disparities in workplace protections, as current New Jersey law bans indoor smoking in nearly all workplaces except casinos.

This lawsuit against the state's exemption for casinos comes amidst similar debates in other states and follows years of unsuccessful political campaigns by the anti-smoking faction to effectuate legislative change. The outcome of this legal action could significantly impact both the health standards of casino workplaces and the financial dynamics of gambling in New Jersey.