

## TEENS

*Speak Out***Why Limit Where People Can Smoke?**

**M**ost people know that smoking is hazardous to your health. Smoking causes cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, and many other health problems. However, people still debate the hazards of secondhand smoke. People also debate whether the rights of nonsmokers should be considered over the rights of smokers. There are laws in place to limit where people can smoke. For example, federal law prohibits smoking on airplanes, and many cities and towns do not allow smoking in restaurants and public buildings. Is it fair to restrict smoking?

There are two sides to this issue. Read the viewpoints and consider both positions. How do they compare to your own thoughts on this topic?

**Outdoor Smoking**

## Benefits of Restricting Smoking

There is no debate. The National Institutes of Health reports that secondhand smoke contains more than 50 chemicals that can cause cancer. Restricting where people smoke limits the exposure of nonsmokers to these harmful substances. Nonsmokers should not have to breathe secondhand smoke. It's a health risk that should not be forced on others. Smokers may decide to expose themselves to the dangers of smoking, but they should not have the right to decide to expose nonsmokers to those health dangers too.

“I don't want to smell someone else's smoke, and that's my choice. Besides, secondhand smoke kills people.”

—Tashauna J., age 15



## Benefits of Unrestricted Smoking

Many people dislike the smell of tobacco smoke, but the rights of smokers should be balanced against the rights of nonsmokers. Some studies show there are dangers linked to secondhand smoke, but other studies have shown no danger. If a smoker is not hurting others, he should be able to smoke wherever he wants. Smokers who are trying to quit need time to adjust to a nonsmoking lifestyle. In several states, restaurants restrict smoking. So do airports, and many businesses. As long as smokers are polite and don't blow their smoke toward nonsmokers, they should be able to smoke wherever they want.

“If the jury is still out on the harm caused by secondhand smoke, why should I or anyone else care where people smoke?”

—Kevin C., age 16



### Activity

## Beyond the Classroom

- 1. Summarize** what you learned about the impact of secondhand smoke after reading Chapter 20. Write a one-page letter to the editor persuading others of your point of view. What other issues besides health risks should be considered when determining where people should be able to smoke?
- 2. Analyze** laws in your city and state that restrict smoking. Where is smoking prohibited? What laws

govern the size and location of areas where smoking is permitted? What age limits apply to people in your state who want to purchase cigarettes or other tobacco products?



For more information about smoking restrictions, use this code at [glencoe.com](http://glencoe.com).