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Let's really put children

first in Oregon

By **BILL WALTON**

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In 2001, the Oregon Legislature passed HB 2828, the Clean Indoor Air Law, in order to protect the health of more Oregonians.

Prior to the passage of legislation, only two states (California and Massachusetts) had no-smoking laws. In Oregon, Corvallis was the only city to have a no-smoking ordinance.

As mayor of Central Point, upon writing the no-smoking ordinance, Doug Engle, the city attorney, changed the language into legal terminology without altering the intent of the ordinance. It was the intent to exclude free-standing bars, bars and lounges in restaurants with separate heat/air ducting and entrances, bowling alleys and bingo halls.

Overtly, the intent for the exemptions

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was to allow those addicted to nicotine access to establishments for social activities where children are not usually present. Covertly, there were doubts in my mind that the ordinance would be approved by the voters without these exemptions. My intuitions proved to be valid on election day.

In the past four years great strides have occurred. California, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island have enacted 100 percent smoke-free environments.

Oregon is not 100 percent smoke-free. Over 33,000 Oregon workers are still exposed to secondhand smoke.

According to the Journal of the

Southern Oregon's drug problem is pandemic in my opinion. There is a plethora of avenues presented by numerous entities to examine the causes, effects and costs to society related to the drug problem. The avenues of intent deal with the thrust of the bullet.

Potential solutions are so minuscule, one almost turns away, thinking, "This grain of sand would have little effect, if implemented." Let's not turn our backs on the children of Oregon. The proposal to add an addendum to the Oregon Indoor Clean Air Law and make Oregon 100 percent smoke-free should be seriously considered by the Legislature if we as citizens truly have the intent of Children First in Oregon.

Bill Walton is the former mayor of Central Point.

rapid increase in cities establishing no-smoking ordinances of non-uniformity city to city. The Legislature was pressured into establishing a uniform law for the state of Oregon.

Now it's time for the Legislature to add an addendum to the Oregon Clean Indoor Air Law by making Oregon a 100 percent smoke-free work environment. We owe it to the 33,000 workers currently being exposed to secondhand smoke. In addition to the health benefits of these workers, we owe it to the children of Oregon to make positive cultural changes in their minds and behavior.

Society looks for a magic bullet to solve personal family, social and cultural abnormalities. It's not the thrust of the bullet that needs our attention. It's the grains and quality of the gunpowder that propels the projectile.