



North Carolina Governor and Legislature Advance Cigar Bar Legislation

PCA | July 9, 2024

This week, North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper signed S.B. 527, which allows for enhanced flexibility in permitting cigar bars in the state. The legislation had previously passed the North Carolina Senate 33-11 and the House of Representatives 105-4 as a regulatory reform measure addressing alcohol beverage control.

Now, prospective cigar bars no longer have to be in free-standing buildings unless they serve food, and it will allow existing cigar shops to seek such permitting.

The language was supported and advanced by North Carolina State Senator Todd Johnson, who stated, "I was pleased to help advance the language in S.B. 527, allowing for some flexibility in the permitting of cigar bars in North Carolina. I certainly don't envision such establishments popping up like coffee shops, but for those who want to open or expand such small businesses, the state shouldn't stand in the way. It works in other parts of the country, and it can work here."

The Premium Cigar Association supports the legislation and commends the Governor and legislature for making SB 597 a reality. Glynn Loope, PCA director of state advocacy, stated, "North Carolina has created a model to be emulated in other states. Currently, there is cigar bar legislation pending or under consideration in Ohio, New York, and Wisconsin and being evaluated in Michigan. Following the successful passage of related legislation in North Dakota and Connecticut, it is obvious that legislatures are recognizing the fundamental difference between cigar bars and lounges, and other establishments. Cigar bars cater to a discerning adult clientele, and these bills are being recognized as positive for the local small business community. Local governments in Colorado, Georgia, Missouri, and Indiana have also recently approved cigar bar ordinances. It's a recognition as to how unique the premium cigar sector truly is."

PCA is planning to support related legislation as it prepares for the 2025 sessions in capitols throughout the country.



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