

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Friday, February 22, 2008
Contact: Josie Klingaman (515) 419-1038

Reichert votes against rights of farmers

(DES MOINES) – An amendment put before the Iowa House that would have exempted private farming practices from the state's smoking ban was defeated on Wednesday night, with Rep. Nathan Reichert casting one of the deciding votes against it.

The amendment, H-8016, would have added "property owned by a farm corporation to the list of areas exempted from the smoking ban." This includes smoking in tractors, pick-ups and other farm equipment.

The final bill, which passed 55-45 and now heads to the Senate for consideration, bans smoking in most every other public or corporate workspace, with the exception of gaming casinos. This exemption led lawmakers to wonder why casinos are given this allowance, but a farmer in a privately-owned tractor is not.

"This amendment simply stated that if a farmer wanted to smoke, in a vehicle bought privately for a corporation, he or she should have that right," said House Republican Christopher Rants. "It is scary when the government forces itself into your personal tractor cab and tells you what you cannot do. That is exactly what Rep. Reichert did with his vote."

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Josie Klingaman
Communications Director
House Republican Leader Christopher Rants
(515) 281-3432-direct line
(515) 419-1038-cell phone
www.rants.us
www.iowahouserpublicans.com
www.youtube.com/iowahouse