

# House rejects smoking ban

By Mike Smith  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

## INDIANAPOLIS

The Indiana House rejected legislation Wednesday that would ban smoking in passenger vehicles in which children under age 13 are present.

The bill by Rep. Charlie Brown, D-Gary, had cleared committee 8-1 but was rejected 51-43 on the floor.

Brown said he knew some

members would view the bill as too much government intrusion into personal lives, but he said lawmakers should act to protect children from secondhand smoke.

No one spoke directly against the bill. Rep. David Frizzell, R-Indianapolis, who represents White River Township, did ask Brown, "Are we going to start setting up roadblocks checking these things out?" Frizzell later voted no.

Republican Rep. Robert Cherry, R-Greenfield, said he voted

against the bill because it would create more state authority over the lives of families.

"They know best. I don't think it's a place where government needs to get involved," he said.

Under the bill, police could not stop a motorist solely because someone was smoking with children in the car. The initial stop would have to be based on a primary offense, such as speeding.

A smoking violation would carry a \$25 fine the first time and

\$100 for any subsequent offense.

The bill also would make it illegal to smoke in mass transportation terminals such as airports or bus stations, or within 100 feet of their entrances.

Indiana was one of several states or jurisdictions weighing such restrictions. Arkansas, Louisiana, Puerto Rico and Bangor, Maine, have passed similar laws in the past year, said Matt Barry, policy research director for the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.

## AT THE STATEHOUSE

### House approves bill to make bestiality a crime

Sexual relations with animals would be a crime in Indiana under a bill the House passed unanimously Wednesday and sent to the Senate.

Although some cities and towns have ordinances prohibiting such acts, bestiality is not against state law.

"I think you would be surprised that some of this legislation has not been passed in Indiana, and many of us were not aware of that," said the bill's author, Democratic Rep. Linda Lawson of Hammond.

### Democrats' budget bill clears amendment stage

House Democrats voted Tuesday to add about \$100 million in additional spending to their proposed two-year, \$26 billion state budget plan.

Although they approved that amendment, predictably they rejected numerous proposed changes offered by Republicans, including one that would allow \$160 million set aside for schools to begin a phase-in of statewide, full-day kindergarten to be used for that or other initiatives such as professional development for teachers or remediation.

## BRIEFS NATION

WASHINGTON

### Consumer prices pushed by medical care, food

Consumer prices increased at a faster pace than expected in January while a gauge of future economic activity posted a tiny increase, raising concerns about inflation and future growth.

The Consumer Price Index was up 0.2 percent in January as a big drop in energy prices only partially offset sizable increases in the cost of medical care, food, airline tickets and tobacco, the Labor Department reported Wednesday.

Core inflation, which excludes volatile energy and food components, rose 0.3 percent, the biggest one-month gain in seven months. Both figures were higher than economists had been expecting.

In other economic news, the Conference Board's index of leading economic indicators edged up a tiny 0.1 percent in January, far below the 0.6 percent December increase.

WASHINGTON

### Downloading crackdown focuses on colleges

Cracking down on college students, the music industry is sending thousands more complaints to top universities this school year than it did last year as it targets music illegally downloaded over campus computer networks.

A few schools, including Ohio and Purdue universities, already have received more than 1,000 complaints accusing individual students since last fall — significant increases over the past school year. For students who are caught, punishments vary from e-mail warnings to semester-long suspensions from classes.

The trade group for the largest music labels, the Recording Industry Association of America, identified at the request of The Associated Press the 25 universities that received the most copyright complaints it sent so far this school year. The group long has pressured schools to act more aggressively against online pirates on campus.

## BRIEF WORLD

VIENNA, Austria

### Iran could face further nuclear sanctions

Iran called Wednesday for talks with the United States — but despite a U.N. Security Council deadline did not budge on council demands that it mothball its uranium enrichment program or face harsher sanctions.

Amid Iran's nuclear defiance, the U.N. nuclear watchdog finalized a report to be released today. It is expected to formally confirm the Islamic republic's refusal to freeze enrichment — a conclusion that could subject it to tougher U.N. sanctions.

Officials at the International Atomic Energy Agency said the report by Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the Vienna-based U.N. agency, would say Iran has expanded enrichment efforts instead of freezing them.

## THE WAR IN IRAQ

# Britain to withdraw 1,600 troops from Iraq

## Prime minister plans more cuts

By David Stringer  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### LONDON

British troops have achieved many tangible successes in Iraq — securing oil platforms, rounding up rogue police units and driving smugglers carrying weapons and contraband from waterways and border crossings.

Now some of these tasks will be ceded to Iraqi troops for good.

Under proposals laid out by Prime Minister Tony Blair on Wednesday, Britain will withdraw about 1,600 troops from Iraq over the coming months and hopes to make other cuts to its 7,100-strong contingent by late summer.

British troops would likely stay in the southern Basra region until at least 2008, training local forces, working to secure the Iran-Iraq border and maintaining supply routes to U.S. and coalition troops in central Iraq, Blair told legislators.

Britain could further reduce its force level to below 5,000 once a base at Basra Palace is transferred to Iraqi control in late summer, the prime minister said.

"What all of this means is not that Basra is how we want it to be. But it does mean that the next chapter in Basra's history can be written by Iraqis," Blair said.

The announcement, on the same day Denmark said it would withdraw its 460 troops, comes as the United States is implementing an increase of 21,000 more troops for Iraq — putting Washington on an opposite track as its main coalition allies.



BLAIR



A British army soldier patrols a street in Basra, Iraq, on Wednesday. Britain will withdraw approximately 1,600 troops from Iraq in coming months if Iraq can secure the southern part of the country, Prime Minister Tony Blair said Wednesday.

# President losing support of allied nations

By Tom Raum  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### WASHINGTON

President Bush's "coalition of the willing," long seen by much of the world as a shell for a largely U.S. operation in Iraq, is quickly becoming a coalition of the unwilling.

Even as Bush sends more American forces to Baghdad, longtime ally Tony Blair is pulling out British troops. Denmark is leaving. Lithuania says it may withdraw its tiny 53 troop contingent.

Bush's alliance is breaking up as opposition firms against the U.S. troop build-up — among the American and Iraqi people, in Congress and among Iraq's neighbors and some former U.S. allies.



BUSH

## ANALYSIS

"There is no military solution to the sectarian and insurgent conflict in Iraq," said Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. He said the United States should follow the British prime minister's lead and start reducing forces.

The British announcement reverberated on the U.S. presidential campaign trail as well.

"I hope that since the president seems unwilling to listen to the results of the November election or to the new Democratic majority in Congress, that he would at least listen to someone who he has claimed has been his strongest ally in this effort," Democratic candidate Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton said while campaigning in Nevada.

Blair has seen his popularity at home plummet since standing with Bush on the 2003 invasion. On Wednesday, Blair told Parliament that Britain would withdraw almost a quarter of its 7,100 troops in the coming months — and hoped to withdraw more by late summer.

That decision, along with drawdowns by other coalition members, goes against the course taken by the United States, which is sending 21,500 more troops into Iraq. There are currently 139,000 there, the Pentagon said Wednesday.

The Bush administration and Blair put a positive spin on the latest development, suggesting it represented success in stabilizing largely Shiite southern Iraq, not a retreat.

Analysts were skeptical, noting that most of the non-U.S. forces had been stationed in predominantly Shiite or Kurdish areas spared the intense sectarian violence that has rocked Baghdad-area neighborhoods.

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