Research Guide: Fire-Safe Cigarettes and Cigarette Manufacturers

This guide is also available at: www.suffolk.edu/archive/47125

Introduction:
The Moakley Archive and Institute at Suffolk University has many resources that explore Congressman Moakley’s twenty-year effort to create a national standard for the production of fire-safe cigarettes. Moakley’s interest in the issue stemmed from a fatal, cigarette-caused fire in his district in 1979 that killed a family in Westwood, Mass. In an effort to prevent similar tragedies, Moakley began a legislative campaign to tighten regulations on the tobacco industry and to require the production of self-extinguishing cigarettes.

Fire-safe cigarette (FSC) related documents in Congressman Moakley’s papers (MS 100) can serve as a case study to understand the process by which laws are created, put before Congress and ratified (or not); an illustration of bipartisanship, and to examine the influence of lobbyists on Congress.

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Background Information:
Cigarette-caused fires and deaths were in the national spotlight prior to Joe Moakley’s involvement; his involvement began after a Westwood (Massachusetts) family of seven, five children and two parents were killed in May 1979 in a house fire ignited by a discarded cigarette. When word reached Moakley that a self-extinguishing cigarette could have prevented this tragedy, he began investigating why such a cigarette was not available. Throughout his time in Congress, Moakley worked tirelessly to introduce and pass FSC legislation; his endeavors in the House of Representatives were mirrored in the Senate by Alan Cranston (D-CA, 1969-1993) and John Heinz (R-PA, 1977-1991).

In October 1979 Moakley introduced his first cigarette related legislation, the “Cigarette Safety Act (CSA) which called for “the creation of a fire safety standard for cigarettes
that would be less likely to ignite upholstered furniture and mattresses.”¹ The Technical Study Group (TGS) was created after a revised CSA passed in 1984; this group explored whether or not it was possible to produce a safer cigarette that was also commercially viable. By 1987 TGS research proved that a fire-safe cigarette could be achieved if manufactured with the following elements: a filter tip, less porous citrate-free paper, expanded tobacco and a smaller diameter. Legislation passed in 1990 gave the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) three years to create a successful testing mechanism for fire-safe cigarettes. The next bill, introduced in March 1999, H.R. 1130, gave the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) eighteen months to develop a safety standard for cigarettes. More importantly it required cigarette manufacturers conform to those standards in one year. Congressman Moakley’s tenure in the House ended in 2001; thus H.R. 1130 became the last piece of FSC legislation he submitted. After Joe Moakley passed away in 2001 Representative Ed Markey (D-MA) assumed his role in the fight for FSC legislation. Markey honored Moakley’s efforts and achievements, when he named H.R. 4607 the “John Joseph Moakley Memorial Fire-Safe Cigarette Act of 2002.”

Over time, lobbyists have played a crucial role on both sides of the fire-safe cigarette (FSC) debate. Pro-FSC groups have included firefighter and fire prevention organizations, consumer health and public policy groups, burn victims and furniture manufacturers. The main opponent against tighter regulation has been the tobacco industry. Due largely in part to the tobacco lobby, a national law requiring FSC has yet to be achieved. Therefore, a unique aspect of this issue is that FSC laws have only been enacted at the state level. Effective July 2011 all 50 states have passed law requiring all cigarettes be self-extinguishing.

SMART catalog search terms: http://www.suffolk.edu/archive/smart.html
Use a combination of the following search terms in Suffolk’s online catalog (SMART) to find relevant folders in the Moakley Papers:
cigarette*, cig*, fire safe, tobacco, tobac*, smok*, health, Morris, Reynolds, nicot*, Cranston, IAFF, fire, firefighter, IAFC, NFPA, CPSC

Research Materials: Moakley Papers (MS100)
Legislative Correspondence, 1974-2001, n.d. (MS100/02.02)
  • Folders: 0241, 0610, 0634, 0685, 0770, 1057, 1209, 1215, 1345, 1346, 1347, 1380, 1540, 1622, 1675, 1789
Legislative Assistant Files: Carlton Currens, 1968-1989 (MS100/03.01)
  • Folders: 25, 41, 42
Legislative Assistant Files: Ellen Harrington, 1963-2001 (MS100/03.03)
  • Folders: 199, 203, 241-542
Legislative Assistant Files: Sophie (Wattles) Hayford, 1977-1993 (MS100/03.05)

• Folder: 31

District Issues, 1972-2001 (MS100/04)
  • Folders: 145-147

Press Releases, 1972-2001 (MS100/07.03)
  • Folders: 98, 405, 413, 414, 479, 508, 509, 555, 557, 588, 593, 596, 610

Congressional Speeches, 1970s-2001 (MS100/08.01)
  • Folders: 279, 342

Non-Congressional Speeches, 1970s-2001 (MS100/08.02)
  • Folders: 239, 522

Audio Recordings, 1970s-2001, n.d. (MS100/09.01)
  • Item: 41

Video Recordings, 1972-2001, n.d. (MS100/09.02)
  • Items: 42, 48, 60-62, 123, 175, 178, 180

Memorabilia, 1952-2007, n.d. (MS100/09.03)
  • Item: 32

Congressional Photographs, 1973-2001 (MS100/10.02)
  • Folders: 45, 70, 72

Digitized Resources: Moakley Papers
  • MS100/03.03-244: Fire-safe cigarettes: Westwood Fire, Boston Globe, 6/5/1979, DI-0654
  • MS100/03.03-324: Fire-safe cigarettes: Member’s Folder: Hearing on H.R. 1880 (Folder 1 of 2), 3/21/1983, DI-0653
  • MS100/03.03-370: Fire-safe cigarettes: “Fire Safe Cigarette legislation signed by President,” news release, 10/30/1984, DI-0655
  • MS100/10.02-070: Photograph– Fire-safe Cigarette hearing, 1983, DI-0318, DI-0319

Suffolk University Archives Reference Files (SUA-004.03)
  • Folders: 315-327, 558

Oral History Interviews:
Available at the Moakley Oral History Blog http://oralhistory.blogs.suffolk.edu/
  • Oral History Interview of Joe Moakley, 2001
  • Oral History Interview of Peter King, 2004

Other Archival Collections
    o http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/record=b16288896~S54
Secondary Sources

Books:


**Government Publications:**

**Journal Articles:**
“NBS identifies changes in cigarettes to be more fire-safe.” *Fire and Arson Investigator* 42 (1991): 19.

**Web Resources:**
- Citizens for Fire Safety: [http://www.cffsi.org](http://www.cffsi.org)
- The Coalition for Fire Safe Cigarettes: [http://www.firesafecigarettes.org](http://www.firesafecigarettes.org)
- Legacy Tobacco Documents Library: [http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/](http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/)
- National Fire Protection Association: [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)
- Tobacco Documents Online: [http://tobaccodocuments.org](http://tobaccodocuments.org)