



CIGAR RIGHTS OF AMERICA

10533 Main Street, Fairfax, Virginia 22030, U.S.A.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: January 28, 2010

Contact: Brian Berman

Phone: (818) 541-1535

Email: info@cigarrights.org

**New York's Professional Tobacconists Organize to
Battle Local and State Legislation**

**Cigar Rights of America Facilitates Formation of
New York's First State Tobacconist Association**

New York City, New York - In an historic gathering of statewide professional tobacconists, a group of over two dozen retail tobacconists gathered at the Grand Havana Room in New York City to launch the New York Tobacconist Association (NYTA).

With the onslaught of anti-tobacco ordinances and legislation, the coalition of traditional competitors are coming together to combat further intrusion into their businesses, to oppose measures that can impact the product choices of their patrons, to address the cost of both doing business in New York, and the cost of goods to their customers.

As noted by Ron Melendi, General Manager of De La Concha tobacconists of New York City, "It's time for our voices to be heard. For too long, we have let our representatives pass laws that adversely affect our businesses, and the ability of our customers to enjoy a perfectly legal array of products. It's time to say enough is enough." Melendi was named the founding chairman of the NYTA.

The New York effort is being assisted by Cigar Rights of America (CRA) as a national consumer-based organization for cigar enthusiasts. CRA Executive Director Glynn Loope was present at the organizational meeting, stating "Each of these shops represent thousands of customers. Now, they are voters for the cause. We will educate them about how their representatives vote, about the legislation they introduce, and work to halt this Prohibition Era style of policies flowing from New York City to Albany."

With the recently adopted flavored tobacco ban central to the group's concern, there will be a comprehensive agenda of issues to be addressed. In addition to the flavored tobacco issue, the group will address fees and taxation, regulatory matters, and any further indoor or outdoor smoking restrictions.

The New York Tobacconist Association elected a charter board of directors, adopted by-laws, and heard a presentation from the firm Gotham Government Relations on lobbying on local and state issues.

The group initiated an 'open door' policy that any premium licensed tobacconist in New York can join the group, with a plan for statewide recruitment underway for consumer members joining Cigar Rights of America, and retail tobacconists joining the NYTA.

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About Cigar Rights of America

Cigar Rights of America (CRA) was founded on the principle of fighting for the freedom to enjoy premium cigars. A consumer-based, non-profit public advocacy organization that works with local, state and federal governments to protect the freedoms of cigar enthusiasts, CRA works with its constituency of members including manufacturers, retailers and cigar enthusiasts to focus on opposing restrictive smoking bans and increased taxation of cigars. www.CigarRights.org

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