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Fire-Safe Cigarettes: a Research Guide

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Fire-Safe Cigarettes: a research guide

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.

The fire-safe cigarette (FSC) related documents in Congressman Moakley's papers (MS 100) provides insight on the legislative process by which laws are created and ratified (or not); as well as a means 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.

Moakley Archive Catalog search terms:

<http://archivecatalog.suffolk.edu/MhomeA.aspx?dir=MOAKLEY>

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

¹ Unknown. “Fire-safe cigarettes”. SUA-003.04: FSC Legislation (H.R.) 1130, 1999.

Primary Sources

Primary Sources available at the Moakley Archive & Institute

The list below is a compilation of primary sources available at the Moakley Archive, including links to digitized materials where applicable. The list also provides references to archival collections at other institutions. Browse the Moakley Archives for all [digitized materials](#) related to this topic.

Congressman John Joseph 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
- Includes correspondence between Congressman Moakley and his constituents regarding fire-safe cigarette legislation and policy.

Legislative Assistants Files: Carlton Currens, 1968-1989 (MS100/03.01)

- Folders: 25, 41, 42
- Includes draft legislation, background materials, letters from constituents, press releases, correspondence with colleagues, and other items related to fire-safe cigarette initiatives.
- [Digitized documents from this series](#)

Legislative Assistants Files: Ellen Harrington, 1963-2001 (MS100/03.03)

- Folders: 199, 203, 241-542
- Includes draft legislation, background materials, letters from constituents, press releases, correspondence with colleagues, and other items related to fire-safe cigarettes.
- [Digitized documents from this series](#)

Legislative Assistants Files: Sophie (Wattles) Hayford, 1977-1993 (MS100/03.05)

- Folder: 31
- Includes draft legislation, background materials, letters from constituents, press releases, correspondence with colleagues, and other items related to fire-safe cigarettes.

District Issues (MS100/04)

- Folders: 145-147

- Includes draft legislation, background materials, letters from constituents, press releases, correspondence with colleagues, and other items related to fire-safe cigarettes.

Press Releases (MS100/07.03)

- Folders: 98, 405, 413, 414, 479, 508, 509, 555, 557, 588, 593, 596, 610
- Include new releases from Congressman Moakley's office related announcing his legislative initiatives related to fire-safe cigarettes.

Congressional Speeches (MS100/08.01)

- Folders: 279 and 342
- Include speeches on busing made by Congressman Moakley before the U.S. House of Representatives.

Non- Congressional Speeches (MS100/08.02)

- Folders: 239 and 522
- Includes speeches made by Congressman Moakley at public events in his district and elsewhere.

Audio Files (MS100/09.01)

- Item: 41
- A recording of a Consumer Product Safety Commission meeting which briefed members on the potential fire resistance of upholstered furniture materials when exposed to cigarettes and other fire hazards.

Video Files (MS100/09.02)

- Items: 42, 48, 60-62, 123, 175, 178, 180, 181
- Includes copies of television programs and hearings that feature fire-safe cigarette topics including the tobacco industry's efforts to block the policy change.

Memorabilia (MS100/09.03)

- Item: 32
- Congressman Moakley received the Boston Firefighter's 1979 Friend of the Firefighter award in recognition of his dedication to firefighters.

Congressional Photographs (MS100/10.02)

- Folders: 45, 70, 72
- Includes photographs from Congressional hearings and press conferences.
- [Digitized items from this series](#)

Oral History Interviews

The Moakley Oral History Project includes interviews that touch on the topic of fire-safe cigarettes.

Digitized interview recordings and transcripts are available on our Digital Collections site:

- [Oral history interview with Peter King \(OH-031\)](#)
- [Oral History Interview of Roger Kineavy \(OH-074\)](#)

Other Archival Collections

- Alan MacGregor Cranston papers, 1914-1993. Bancroft Library. University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA.
 - <http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/record=b16288896~S54>
- Congressional papers of H. John Heinz III of Pennsylvania, 1963-1991. Carnegie Mellon University. Pittsburgh, PA. <https://digitalcollections.library.cmu.edu/cmu-collection/sen-h-john-heinz-iii>
- Legacy Tobacco Documents Library:
<https://www.industrydocumentslibrary.ucsf.edu/tobacco/>

Secondary Sources

Many of the books and articles are available at Suffolk's Sawyer Library or Moakley Law Library. Please contact the Archives for more information.

Books

** indicates title is available at the Suffolk University Libraries*

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Journal articles

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Online Resources

- Consumer Product Safety Commission: <http://www.cpsc.gov>
- Legacy Tobacco Documents Library: <https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/tobacco/>
- National Fire Protection Association: <http://www.nfpa.org>
- The Tobacco Institute: <http://www.tobaccoinstitute.com/>