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North Dakota HB 1152
House Committee on Industry, Business and Labor
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My name is Deb Knuth and I am the Government Relations Director for the North Dakota American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the nonprofit, non-partisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society advocates for public policies that reduce death and suffering from cancer including policies targeted at reducing tobacco use. ACS CAN strongly opposes HB 1152, a bill that is relating to cigar bars.

North Dakota enjoys one of the most comprehensive smoke-free laws in the nation and its citizens are protected by having smoking prohibited in all enclosed areas of public places and places of employment. At this critical moment with people focused on protecting their respiratory health, we must do everything in our power to keep our communities healthy and safe—which means protecting our current smoke-free law.

Secondhand smoke is a serious health hazard. Ventilation technologies do not sufficiently protect individuals from the harmful effects of breathing in secondhand smoke. The only effective way to fully protect nonsmokers from exposure to secondhand smoke is to eliminate smoking in indoor public spaces. Cigars are a public health risk and a leading cause of laryngeal, oral and esophageal cancers.

Cigar use is a significant public health concern. Cigars—just like cigarettes and other tobacco products—are not safe. They contain many of the same cancer-causing substances as cigarettes and other tobacco products. All tobacco products, including cigars, contain nicotine, which may induce dependence and harm health. Cigars also produce secondhand smoke that is dangerous for non-smokers.

Regulation of cigars is part of ACS CAN's comprehensive approach to reducing tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke in the United States. We must include cigars in smoke-free laws. Secondhand smoke from cigars poses significant health risks to smokers and those around them and should be included as part of any smoke-free law. This includes prohibiting cigar use in cigar and tobacco shops, bars identified as "cigar bars," gaming facilities and wherever else

smoking is prohibited. There is neither a public health nor fiscal justification for giving cigars of any size preferential treatment.

There are no safe tobacco products, and there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. ACS CAN does not support smoke-free laws that allow for separating smokers from nonsmokers or ventilating building as alternatives to requiring a 100 percent smoke-free environment, as the evidence is overwhelming that these measures cannot eliminate exposure of nonsmokers to secondhand smoke.

ACS CAN's work to create 100 percent smoke-free environments is part of a comprehensive approach to addressing tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke in the United States.

ACS CAN supports local, state, and federal initiatives to eliminate public exposure to secondhand smoke, including 100 percent smoke-free laws, prohibiting smoking in all workplaces, including restaurants, bars and casinos which are key to protect nonsmokers, children and workers from the deadly effects of secondhand smoke.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network urges legislators to oppose HB 1152.

Thank you for allowing me to testify. I have also emailed additional information on ventilation and why cigars are not a safe alternative to cigarettes. Are there any questions?