

Testimony Opposition of HB 1152

3/6/2021

Dear Chairman Senator Klein and members of the Senate Industry, Business and Labor Committee. My name is Marie Jensen. I am a registered nurse and tobacco treatment specialist. I am also a board member of the Bismarck Tobacco Free Coalition. Unfortunately, I am unable to join you today. This is my written testimony in opposition of HB 1152.

I strongly oppose this bill because it is important for me to protect the North Dakota Smoke Free Law as it is currently written because all North Dakotans deserve to live and work in a smoke-free environment.

If Cigar Bars and Cigar Lounges are excluded from the Smoke Free Law and allow indoor smoking of their products sold, every patron and employee of that establishment will be exposed to the harmful, lethal, effects of second- and third-hand smoke. Who will ensure that ONLY the purchased cigars are being smoked in the establishment? There is room for DANGEROUS manipulation of this law as it is NOT clearly written. There is potential for any adjacent property to also suffer the effects of second- and third-hand smoke because we know that heating and ventilation systems are not 100% efficient at removing smoke from the air. The health risks associated with cigar smoking are not questionable or defensible.

If the Smoke Free Law is changed as proposed, it will send a clear message to adolescents and adults that our North Dakota leaders support the use of tobacco and ignore the harmful effects of second- and third-hand smoke. As a nurse and TTS, I assist individuals with quitting tobacco products. The ND Smoke Free Law provides a safe environment that encourages these individuals to be smoke-free and not exposed to triggers such as the sight of another smoking and the odor of second-hand smoke. The health consequences from any tobacco use are devastating.

I urge you to oppose HB 1152 because our current Smoke Free Law is one of the biggest public health accomplishments in North Dakota. ND has been recognized in the 2016 Surgeon General Report as a model law. We are proud of the Smoke Free Law as it is written. This law is the vaccine against second-hand smoke exposure and creates equality for everyone to breathe clean air. As a nurse and TTS, I am passionate about preserving and upholding our Smoke Free Law to keep our ND citizens and my patients healthy.

I ask the Senate Industry, Business and Labor Committee to vote "NO" on HB 1152. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Very Respectfully,
Marie Jensen, BSN, RN, CLC, TTS
6500 Omar St Bismarck, ND 58504
701-471-9729