

Good Afternoon Chairman Klein and members of the Senate Industry, Business, and Labor Committee,

My name is Madeline Erickson. I am a junior at St. Mary's Central High School in Bismarck and a National Youth Ambassador for the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK). For more than 20 years the CTFK has fought to protect children and save lives from the number one cause of preventable death: tobacco use. I stand before you today in opposition of House Bill 1152. Many arguments have already been shared surrounding this bill, but I want to voice the concerns of North Dakota's youth, the people who will be most affected by this bill in the future. I am here today to present these concerns and urge you to think not of what this bill can do for you in the present, but how it will affect the youth in the future.

During previous discussion surrounding this bill it was mentioned that cigar bars can be a place for leaders to meet and make important decisions. These cigar bars would be considered a place of prestige and refinement. But, why do we have to make cigar bars "the room where it happens?" As someone who intends to be a future leader and hopes to be part of these decision making processes, why should I and countless others have to sacrifice our health just to be an influential North Dakotan? The answer is we should not. We should not have to risk our health because of the whims of a few in the present. We should not have to sacrifice our health because of a decision we had no say in, a decision we won't get to make for ourselves. A decision from which we will suffer the consequences. The choice this committee and this Senate makes will not only impact today's leaders, but tomorrow's leaders as well and arguably the latter to a greater degree. Please remember to consider my generation and all those dreaming about being leaders, as I am right now.

The second concern I would like to raise is for the future workers of the proposed cigar bars. Many of these employees will be young adults, just looking for a job. As someone who is nearing college myself and has friends already in college, I know that when most students are offered a well paying job or any job at all, they don't necessarily consider the risks. They are focused on paying rent, tuition, and even providing for a family. Just because they sign a piece of paper or verbally consent that they understand the risks doesn't mean that they have necessarily considered those long-term risks. The employees of these proposed cigar bars will not be the only casualties. Please also consider all those working in the same building or adjacent buildings. This bill would expose workers and residents who have no connection to the cigar bars whatsoever except proximity and yet will have to suffer the consequences of second hand smoke. I ask you today to remember the workers when making your decisions, especially those workers that have their whole life before them.

My third and final concern this afternoon is the economic ramifications of this bill. Cigar bars will provide North Dakota with economic benefits in the present and utility to their consumers. However, I would like to emphasize that these are short-term benefits and the economic effects on my generation will far outweigh these benefits. I have already discussed the health effects on all employees related and unrelated to cigar bars. These effects would not manifest until much further down the road and could be financially disastrous. Ask yourselves

who will shoulder the burden of taxes that will come with these health effects? By the time they appear, it will be my generation. We will pay for a decision that we did not make and in which we had no voice. We will suffer the brunt of the economic consequences.

This bill to create an exception in North Dakota's smoke free law will have lasting repercussions on my generation. Is it truly fair to leave these burdens on us? I ask you today to consider the health and safety of my peers and I, of your children and grandchildren and vote in opposition of this bill.

Thank you for your time. I am now open for questions.