

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF HB 1229

Amy Heuer
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Chairman Rep. Louser, and members of the Industry, Business, and Labor Committee. My name is Amy Heuer, Co-Executive Director for the North Dakota Society of Health and Physical Educators (ND SHAPE), and currently a Middle School Health and Physical Education Teacher in Bismarck. I am here to provide testimony and my opposition for HB 1229.

Tobacco, regardless if it is in cigarette, cigar, chew, or vape form, has been proven to be a carcinogen, as well as having multiple other preventable life threatening cardiovascular and pulmonary conditions. I have seen these health issues first-hand, watching my mother battle cardiovascular disease that led to multiple strokes and eventually cardiac arrest. She smoked for 25 years, quitting when she was diagnosed with high blood pressure, but by then the damage was done. I have spent most of my adult years combating the influence of tobacco to prevent others from suffering through what my family has.

Ten years ago North Dakota citizens made their wishes known in regards to indoor smoking and protecting workers and customers, voting for a comprehensive smoke free law. HB 1229 is not only disregarding the vote of ND citizens, but also disrespecting them. With only 4.3% of North Dakotan adults smoking cigars, it is baffling why this legislature would consider this bill when it would put employees and customers in those facilities at such a great risk. Cigars have a greater output of secondhand smoke due to burning for a longer period of time than cigarettes, and having more tobacco than a cigarette. The risks associated with secondhand smoke are worse with cigars than cigarettes.

The citizens of North Dakota voted for smoke free indoor workplaces. Everyone should have the right and protection to breathe clean indoor air. HB 1229 disregards our citizens wishes and safety in favor of less than 5% of our population and a handful of business owners that are disregarding the health of their employees and customers.

I urge you to vote NO on HB 1229. We have made great strides in our state with reducing tobacco use rates and protecting individuals from secondhand smoke. I ask the Industry, Business, and Labor Committee to vote no on HB 1229. Thank you.

Amy Heuer