



**American
Heart
Association.**

January 17, 2023

Please accept this testimony on behalf of over 500 volunteer advocates across the state of North Dakota who stand in opposition to House Bill 1229. Additionally, please be aware this bill works directly against the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), vision *"To make North Dakota the healthiest state in the nation"*.

As of January 2019, 30 states and more than 1000 municipalities (*just over two-thirds of the US population*) are covered by a smoke-free policy that includes bars and restaurants, saving tens of thousands of lives and millions of dollars in health care costs.

With the introduction of this bill last session, and again this session, the communications are HB 1229 will allow individuals the freedom of choice. The reality is this freedom of choice will impact individuals in proximity, friends, and family. The scientific evidence is clear: there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke causes serious diseases and premature death among nonsmokers. That's why all workplaces and public places, including restaurants, bars and casinos should be smoke-free. Everyone should have the right to breathe clean air.

Lost productivity caused by diseases that result from secondhand smoke exposure is estimated at \$5 billion every year.

Far too many people – especially children and the elderly – are exposed to secondhand smoke. This puts them at risk for chronic illnesses like heart disease and cancer

Secondhand smoke exposure is declining, but more than 20% of nonsmoking adults in the U.S. are still exposed to secondhand smoke.

For these reasons, and many more, the American Heart Association, with over 500 volunteer advocates across North Dakota, stands in opposition to Bill HB 1229, and in support of the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), vision *"To make North Dakota the healthiest state in the nation"*.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Burke'.

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PS: Friday, February 3rd is National Wear Red Day! Stay tuned for more details!