

North Dakota House Bill 1229 Related to Exempting Cigar Bars from ND Smoke-Free Law
Senate Industry, Business, and Labor Committee for the 68th Legislative Assembly
January 17, 2023 Hearing

Chairman Louser and members of the Senate Industry, Business, and Labor Committee. My name is Kelly Buettner-Schmidt. I am a resident of Fargo, ND, District 41. Although I am not speaking on behalf of North Dakota State University (NDSU), I am a professor and researcher at NDSU's School of Nursing. I also am an American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) volunteer.

There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

After multiple local North Dakota communities passed laws on the local level requiring smoke-free workplaces, North Dakotans voted overwhelmingly in support of a statewide smoke-free workplace law.

I am very concerned to learn that the ND legislature is considering House Bill 1229 to exempt cigar lounges and bars that sell cigars from our statewide smoke-free law. This would reverse important public health gains in our communities and open the door for additional exemptions.

In published longitudinal studies of the impact of ND's statewide smoke-free law (<https://doi.org/10.1097/NNR.0000000000000286>), my co-authors and I found immediate, substantial and sustained declines in secondhand smoke and elimination of disparities in secondhand smoke exposure in rural communities. This led to an equal distribution of smoke-free laws statewide and increased protection of populations, especially in rural areas, from secondhand smoke.

I urge the Industry, Business and Labor Committee of the House of Representatives to consider the health of North Dakotans and vote against weakening our smoke-free law.

Respectfully submitted,

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