



Testimony in Opposition of HB 1229
House Industry, Business, and Labor Committee

Chairman Louser and Members of the House Industry, Business, and Labor Committee, my name is Mike Krumwiede appearing on behalf of the American Heart Association in opposition of House Bill 1229. In November 2012, North Dakota voters opted to become smoke-free, leading the nation with a strong comprehensive model. Voters in every county in the state favored the law, which advances public health by protecting more workers, residents, and visitors from secondhand smoke exposure in public places and places of employment.

Secondhand smoke (from cigarettes and cigars) has been proven to cause numerous health problems, including heart disease, emphysema, stroke, sudden infant death syndrome and cancer. Secondhand smoke contains toxic chemicals like formaldehyde, cyanide, carbon monoxide, ammonia and nicotine. Exposure to secondhand smoke causes preventable deaths from lung cancer and cardiac-related illnesses. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) makes clear that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

HB 1229, which would allow smoking in bars that sell cigars and so-called cigar lounges would weaken existing protections and pollute the indoor air in North Dakota. In addition, AHA is concerned, it could also create an opening for more exemptions allowing cigar lounges, smoking lounges, vaping bars, hookah bars, and pipe tobacco rooms as possible options.

The original law our voters approved over a decade ago clearly states the importance of protecting public health and the need for individuals to breathe smoke-free air. This extends to all workers including those who work in bars and cigar lounges. For these reasons we urge a DO NOT PASS recommendation on HB 1229. Thank you for your time and consideration.