

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

My name is Madeline Erickson and I am a former member of the Break Free Tobacco Youth Board from Bismarck, North Dakota. I testified in opposition to this bill during the last legislative season and am concerned to see it once again in the legislature. The state of North Dakota has one of the strongest smoke free laws in the country. This is something that I am proud of, however, adding this exemption to the smoke free law erases this progress and opens the door to other dangerous exemptions. I urge this committee not to set a dangerous precedent.

I am concerned that the future ramifications of House Bill 1229 are not being fully considered. It is the job of this Senate to take into account those who will be in contact with the smoke from these cigar bars. These people will not just be the workers or patrons of the establishment, but also the patrons of a restaurant next door or the workers in an office situated in the same complex. These people will be unknowingly risking their health and wellbeing for the enjoyment of a few. I urge you to consider the effects that this bill will have on the general population. The effects of secondhand smoke are not something to be taken lightly or ignored. The smoke from cigar bars will reach far outside the boundaries of the physical establishment and there is nothing that can prevent this other than allowing the smoke free law to remain as it is.

In relation to second hand smoke I would like to raise my concerns for the future workers of the proposed cigar bars. Many of these employees will be young adults, simply looking for a job. As a college student, 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 other living expenses. Just because they sign a piece of paper or verbally consent that they understand the dangers doesn't mean that they have necessarily considered those long-term risks. In addition this bill has no wording that requires future cigar bars to educate their employees or ensure that they understand the consequences of second-hand smoke. This opens the door for health consequences to my generation.

The final point I would like to address is regarding the economic consequence of this bill. Once again I feel as though the short term benefits are the only effects being taken into consideration currently. In reality the long term economic consequences of this bill cannot be ignored. The effects of secondhand

smoke are known to cause long term health complications that not only affect the person, but also decrease productivity and create financial burden on taxpayers. Ultimately, while the short term economic benefits of this bill are appealing, it is fiscally irresponsible in the long run. As my generation enters the work force we will be the taxpayers paying this burden and it is unfair that we should suffer these unnecessary consequences. Please do not forget the future economic ramifications of this bill in return for short term satisfaction.

Overall I feel as though the enjoyment of a few is outweighing the health and safety of the general public. Keep in mind that people are not prevented from enjoying this legal product, however allowing cigar bars creates a dangerous gray area and turns enjoying this product into a fiscally irresponsible burden on my generation. I urge you to vote no on HB 1229 in order to protect us from the dangers of secondhand smoke and future economic consequences.