

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF HB 1229

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Chairman Larson and members of the Senate Industry, and Business Committee. My name is Sommer Frohlich. I am a counselor at the Women's Care Center, a pregnancy resource center in Bismarck. I have a bachelor's degree in Social Work from Minot State University and grew up in Bismarck. I am here today to testify in opposition to House Bill 1229.

My job as a counselor at the Women's Care Center entails meeting with women to provide confidential support and promote healthy pregnancies. We see many women who face difficult obstacles, but work hard making many sacrifices to provide for their growing family.

I am really concerned about allowing smoking cigars indoors. Not only do I worry about secondhand smoke exposure to myself, who would love to start a family in the near future, but I also think of our mothers who often work in environments where they could potentially be exposed to secondhand smoke from cigars.

If a pregnant woman is exposed to secondhand smoke, it is not only bad for her but also for the baby she is carrying. If a pregnancy is exposed to secondhand smoke, there are higher rates of miscarriage, premature births, and low birth weights. I am fearful that many mothers will be exposed to second hand cigar smoke due to their employment. This can be very difficult for so many mothers who work hard and rely on their job to provide for their children. In ND I am so grateful that I can be guaranteed safe air without limitations. I love that we can take care of our community and make public places safe for everyone, even a baby still in their mother's womb.

I recognize just how deadly all tobacco products are including cigars. If our smoke free law were to exempt cigars, we would be exposing people who choose not to use these products to secondhand smoke.

I am a firm believer in North Dakotans looking out for one another, and our current smoke free law does just that. By having a strong statewide smoke free law, we are watching out for one another. Please oppose HB 1229 because so many who choose to live smoke free will be exposed to secondhand smoke. We must continue to care for one another. Thank you for your time. This concludes my testimony.