



Opposition Testimony for HB 1440

Chelsea Ridge
Chair, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Section
North Dakota Public Health Association
Williston, ND

Senator Chairman Weber and members of the Senate Finance and Taxation Committee,

My name is Chelsea Ridge, and I serve as the chairwoman of the North Dakota Public Health Association (NDPHA) Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Section. Our vision is a North Dakota where every person can live their healthiest life. I am here today in strong opposition to House Bill 1440.

In November 2012, voters in every county overwhelmingly supported North Dakota's Smoke-Free Law, which prohibits smoking cigarettes, cigars, marijuana, and e-cigarettes in indoor public places. North Dakota has one of the strongest smoke-free laws in the nation, serving as a model for other states striving to protect their residents from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke.

HB 1440 threatens this public health achievement by allowing smoking in designated businesses, exposing neighboring establishments to secondhand smoke. The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) states that "the only means of avoiding health effects and eliminating indoor Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) exposure is to ban all smoking activity inside and near buildings." Even with ventilation and air filtration, secondhand smoke cannot be fully contained, posing risks to adjacent businesses, including daycares, healthcare facilities, and residential units.

Government policy should prioritize public health over the preferences of a small group of cigar and pipe smokers. In just two years, legislative exemptions have led to the opening of only one cigar lounge, while another city has taken steps to ban such establishments entirely. This erosion of the indoor smoke-free air law has further opened the door for exemptions allowing hookah bars, vaping lounges, and other indoor smoking venues, ultimately undermining the intent of our state's Smoke-Free Law.

The North Dakota Public Health Association strongly urges you to uphold this essential public health measure. Tobacco remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, placing a significant burden on our healthcare system and economy. By maintaining our comprehensive Smoke-Free Law, we can continue to prevent disease, reduce healthcare costs, and protect all North Dakotans equally from the dangers of secondhand smoke.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote **RED** on HB 1440.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Chelsea Ridge
Chair, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Section

Relating to Prohibiting Smoking in Public Places and Worksites
Vote For 1
Precincts Fully: 426 / 426
Partially: 0 / 426

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<input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes ✓	209,488	66.67%
<input type="radio"/> No	104,730	33.33%
TOTAL VOTES	314,218	

ALL OF NORTH DAKOTA'S 53 COUNTIES VOTED IN SUPPORT TO MAKE NORTH DAKOTA 100% SMOKE-FREE BACK IN DECEMBER 2012!!

Back in 2012, every county in ND supported the Smoke Free Law by more than 50% of the vote.

