

Pennsylvania General Assembly

House Health Committee

Testimony of Amy Barkley

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Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

In Support of HB 682 – Amendments to Pennsylvania’s Clean Indoor Air Act

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The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids is a leading force in the fight to reduce tobacco use and its deadly toll in the United States and around the world. Our vision is a future free of the death and disease caused by tobacco. We work to save lives by advocating for public policies that prevent kids from smoking, help smokers quit and protect everyone from secondhand smoke.

We are pleased to join our partners from the American Heart Association, American Lung Association, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network and Americans for Non-Smokers Rights in strong support of HB 682 which will extend the protections of Pennsylvania's Clean Indoor Air Act to all workers in the state. We thank Representative Murt for his leadership on this critical public health issue.

Those of you who were here during the debate over the 2008 law eliminating smoking in many workplaces in Pennsylvania may remember that there were all sorts of claims about the impact of smoke-free laws on various enterprises. The speculation and fear generated by those claims led to numerous exemptions in the law. As you'll hear from my colleagues from other highly respected national health organizations, those loopholes have made the law confusing and complicated to enforce. Most importantly, it has left thousands of Pennsylvania workers exposed to secondhand smoke, a known cause of disease and death in non-smokers, on the job.

HB 682 allows you and other Pennsylvania leaders to act on the facts instead of speculation. In the businesses that have been smoke-free since 2008, we know that workers and patrons are free from exposure to the toxic chemicals in secondhand smoke. That will ultimately save lives and health care dollars. The overall economy and individual businesses have not suffered. In some, and perhaps many cases, the smoke-free environment has brought in new customers, including families who previously avoided restaurants and other businesses because they did not want to expose themselves and their children to secondhand smoke.

Another significant benefit of comprehensive smoke-free laws covering all indoor workplaces and public places is that they also reduce youth smoking. The 2014 Surgeon General's Report, *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress*, noted that, "The primary purpose of laws and policies on secondhand smoke is to protect nonsmokers from exposure to secondhand smoke. However, a growing body of evidence suggests that these policies have the additional benefit of lowering smoking rates among youth and young adults." In addition, the Task Force on Community Preventive Services completed a systematic review of smoke-free policies and concluded that there was strong evidence that these policies have multiple public health benefits, including preventing young people from becoming smokers.

Indeed, studies strongly suggest that young people living in places with strong smoke-free protections are less likely to smoke than those who live in places with weaker or no smoke-free laws. Strong laws are also proven to help smokers who want to quit, and when parents quit, we know that kids are much less likely to smoke themselves. Finally, a stronger clean indoor air law ensures that Pennsylvania's young people, who are themselves current and future members of the workforce, will not have to risk

their health in order to earn a paycheck. Jobs in the hospitality industry, in particular, support many college students who depend on that income to pay college tuition.

The bottom line is – why should any workers in Pennsylvania, regardless of their age or where they work, be exposed to the 7,000 chemicals in secondhand smoke, almost 70 of which cause cancer?

It's time for Pennsylvania to strengthen the current law so that it completely eliminates secondhand smoke from all indoor workplaces and public places work to protect EVERYONE'S right to breathe clean air.