

Tobacco Free Wichita

"If it's in the air...it's in your lungs."

Thank You , Chairman Brunk and members of the committee for the opportunity for the Tobacco Free Wichita Coalition to present written testimony in opposition to the proposed changes to K.S.A. 2011 Supp. 21-6109 and 21-6110. **We oppose HB 2690.**

The Tobacco Free Wichita Coalition has a rich history of educating and informing community members of the dangers of tobacco. The Tobacco Free Wichita Coalition was founded in 1970 "to protect residents of Sedgwick County from the adverse effects of tobacco use" and is the oldest tobacco coalition in the state. Current leaders of the coalition include a mix of agency/non-profit members and local community members with an interest and passion in tobacco use prevention and cessation.

In 2007, the Tobacco Free Wichita Coalition implemented a public opinion survey of registered voters within the City. The results of the survey showed that 73% of those who responded strongly favored a law or ordinance in Wichita that would make all indoor workplaces, including restaurants and bars/clubs, smoke free. The overwhelming support of public health policy that protects all residents from the dangers of secondhand smoke was well documented, becoming a catalyst for change in our community and then the state.

Changing the clean indoor air law at this point would cause unnecessary confusion and frustration for both business owners and patrons. Businesses have made adjustments to comply with the current law and changing the law to allow exemptions will result in disappointed customers, who have grown to appreciate a smoke-free environment. Not allowing exemptions to the current comprehensive clean indoor air law maintains a level playing field ensuring that NO business will be negatively impacted due to a shift in patronage based on whether or not an establishment allows smoking.

In addition, there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. As little as 30 minutes of exposure in an enclosed space for someone with the risk of heart disease can trigger a heart attack. The current law allows for equal protection of all employees where they work and changing the law to allow smoking in certain venues would put those who are exposed to secondhand smoke at a great risk for serious health issues. Wichita is home to thousands of food service employees and the current comprehensive clean indoor air law sends a simple message that people should be able to breathe at work without harming their health.

Passage of the Kansas Indoor Clean Air Act in 2010 was one of the most significant victories for our State in the fight against death and disease. The current law proves that Kansas is a progressive state, dedicated to protecting the health of its residents and ensuring economic vitality for businesses. Please do not allow exemptions to the current comprehensive clean indoor air law that could change that.

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