



Midwest Affiliate
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Testimony In Opposition to HR 6026

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to HR 6026. My name is Kevin Walker and I am the Regional Vice President of Advocacy for the American Heart Association. The American Heart Association opposes this resolution and I urge you to reject it. Our scientific statement on the Impact of Smokeless Tobacco Products on Cardiovascular Disease is clear... smokeless tobacco products are not without harm and we do not recommend these products as an alternative to cigarette smoking or as a cessation product.

This resolution seeks to ensnare the State of Kansas and the Department of Health and Environment in a false choice. Presenting smokeless tobacco products as a safer alternative to cigarette smoking ignores a simple fact...both products cause disease and death. This is the equivalent of asking the Department of Transportation to study if driving your car into a brick wall at 60 mph, 80 mph or 100 mph is safer than doing so at 120 mph.

The State of Kansas should focus its resources on proven tobacco use reduction strategies as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control. Their comprehensive roadmap is clear and is proven effective if funded at appropriate levels – something the Kansas Legislature has failed to do since the program was unveiled in 1999. Kansas currently funds the tobacco use prevention program with only \$1 million.

Diverting money toward specious efforts such as this resolution while struggling to put together a budget as we have this year is hardly prudent.

If the State of Kansas wants to have an impact on tobacco use rates in this State then there are other, proven methods to do so such as:

- eliminating the exemptions from the current clean indoor air law;
- raising the excise tax on cigarettes;
- updating state laws to treat and tax other tobacco products as we do cigarettes; and,
- Increasing funding for proven tobacco use prevention strategies.

I urge you to reject this resolution.

House Federal & State Affairs

Date: 4-26-12

Attachment # 9