



# CONNECTICUT AFL-CIO

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Representative Ritter, Senator Harris and members of the committee, my name is Tom Carusello and I serve as the Political Director of the CT AFL-CIO. We represent over 200,000 working men and women in the State of Connecticut.

I am here to voice our support for HB 5608, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ISSUANCE OF LIQUOR PERMITS TO CASINOS THAT PERMIT SMOKING IN THE CASINO.

In 2009, after all the scientific evidence that we have about second hand smoke, it is surprising that we are still having a debate about this subject. The evidence is in and smoking loses and the time has come for this legislature and the casino operators to understand this and take action accordingly.

I was a smoker for many years and a number of years ago, I found myself standing outside in all types of weather to feed my addiction because smoking was no longer allowed in restaurants and bars.

That prohibition was done to protect the health of not only the other patrons at the establishment but also the health of the employees working at the restaurant or bar.

Is the health of the thousands of people working at the casinos any less important than the health of the person working at your neighborhood bar? If the policy of the state is to prohibit smoking to protect the patrons and workers from second hand smoke then this bill is an important piece of legislation to make that happen.

We can no longer treat these workers different than others in the state. We can no longer say that their health is less important than other people working in the same industry. We can no longer treat these people like second class citizens and expose them to second hand smoke.

I will leave the statistics and medical evidence to others. I ask that you support this legislation based on common sense and fairness. It is time that we started caring about the health and well-being of the casino employees the same way that we care about other workers in the industry.

For this reason, the CT AFL-CIO supports HB 5608 and urges this committee to do so too. Thank you.

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