



**Public Health Committee
March 1, 2010**

Andrew Salner, M.D.

SB 245 – An Act Prohibiting Smoking in Public Places.

Senator Harris, Representative Ritter, distinguished members of the committee, good morning. My name is Dr. Andrew Salner. I am the Director of the Helen and Harry Gray Cancer Center at Hartford Hospital. I am the Past-Chair, American Cancer Society, New England Division. I am also Chair of the Connecticut Cancer Partnership, a public and private coalition of over 300 cancer experts and health care organizations funded by a grant from the CDC to create and implement a Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan here in Connecticut. Today, I am speaking on behalf of the American Cancer Society.

Smoking related diseases are the single most preventable cause of death in our society. Tobacco use accounts for 1/3 of all cancer deaths, including lung, oral, throat, esophagus, pancreas, cervix, kidney, bladder, and stomach cancers. It also accounts for cardiovascular, pulmonary, and cerebrovascular deaths. Secondhand smoke causes between 35,000 and 40,000 deaths from heart disease every year. 3,000 otherwise healthy nonsmokers will die of lung cancer annually because of their exposure to secondhand smoke. These deaths occur because tobacco users are not the only ones who breathe smoke—all the people around them inhale it too. The total annual costs of secondhand smoke exposure are estimated to be at least \$5 billion in direct medical costs and at least \$5 billion in indirect costs.

The only way to protect worker and customer health from the dangers of tobacco is by creating 100% smoke free environments. Multiple studies and tests have concluded that ventilation systems, no matter how advanced, no matter how well placed and how effective they are, can never completely eliminate second hand smoke. Plus, even the most sophisticated ventilation in the world can't prevent smoke from escaping through doors opening and closing.

Nearly seven years ago, opponents of the Clean Indoor Air Act argued that businesses would close, employees would quit, employers would have a hard time hiring new employees and businesses would have difficulty attracting customers as a result of the Act. After looking at the facts, it is clear that these concerns about the business costs of smoke-free policies were unfounded. The facts are that smoke-free laws are good for businesses; they're good for the people who frequent them; and they're good for the people who work in them. Research published in leading, scientific journals has consistently and conclusively shown that smoke-free laws have no adverse effects on businesses, and, in fact, can actually be good for business.

The current small business exemption in the Clean Indoor Air Act is both unnecessary and onerous for small businesses themselves. Small businesses that allow smoking incur greater expenses including higher insurance rates, higher health care costs, higher cleaning costs and

often burdensome requirements concerning well-ventilated smoke free areas, for any employees that request them.

At a time when there is great concern about retaining and attracting businesses to the state, small businesses considering relocation to Connecticut might think twice because of these additional costs.

Eliminating the current exemption would allow these small businesses to use the savings seen by lower insurance and lower health care costs to possibly reinvest into the business, expand operations or hire more employees. In short, this is a win-win solution for businesses, employees and customers as well as Connecticut itself.

While consumers can choose in which establishments they spend their time and money, workers often do not have the same choice. The American Cancer Society believes that no one should have to choose between a job and good health. Therefore, the American Cancer Society strongly believes that a 100% smoke free environment will provide for better working conditions; help ease the health care crisis burden on all of Connecticut's citizens and most importantly save lives. Please support SB 245.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Salner, M.D.
Director, Helen and Harry Gray Cancer Center, Hartford Hospital
Past Chair, American Cancer Society, New England Division
Chair, Connecticut Cancer Partnership