

Testimony of the American Lung Association in Connecticut in Support of Raised Senate Bill No. 948, An Act Concerning Smoking in Workplaces

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Public Health Committee
Room 3000, Legislative Office Building
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Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and Members of the Public Health Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to speak in strong support of Raised Bill No. 948, An Act Concerning Smoking in Workplaces. My name is Dawn Mays-Hardy and I serve as the Connecticut Director of Health Promotion and Public Policy for the American Lung Association.

Our reasons for supporting this bill are simple. First and foremost, a smoke-free work environment should not depend on the number employees exposed. By passing this proposal you will provide protection from secondhand smoke, a known cause of cancer, to more than 75,000 people who work in businesses with fewer than five employees in our state. In addition, the Surgeon General report indicates a workplace free of environmental tobacco smoke promotes a healthier workforce, protects employees and patrons from second hand smoke exposure, and reduces health, life, disability and fire insurance costs.

The medical and economic costs of delayed action on this bill will negatively impact nonsmokers as well as smokers. Nonsmokers will be unnecessarily and involuntarily exposed to carcinogens increasing their chances of developing respiratory illnesses, heart attacks and increased risk of developing cancer by 20-30%. No one should be involuntarily exposed to a cancer causing substance in order to earn a living. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. Workers in our small businesses need and deserve the protection this bill assures.

While the proposal is not designed to force smokers to quit, years of research have demonstrated that when worksites are smoke free, more employees at that workplace quit smoking. This makes sense since over 70% of smokers report wanting to quit. Providing a smoke free workplace is a significant motivator to help smokers be successful quitters.

We value your deep commitment to advancing strong policies that protect workers' health and urge you to support Raised Bill No. 948

promoting smoke free workplaces in Connecticut. Again, thank you for this opportunity.

Dawn Mays-Hardy, MS
CT Director Health Promotion and Public Policy
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