

**Testimony of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health**  
*In Support of Raised Bill 948: An Act Concerning Smoking in Workplaces*  
To the Distinguished Co-Chairs and Members of the Public Health Committee  
March 11, 2011

The Connecticut Association of Directors of Health (CADH) supports *Raised Bill 948: An Act Concerning Smoking in Workplaces*. As you are aware, in 2003 the Connecticut General Assembly passed comprehensive legislation to prohibit smoking in, among other places, workplaces with five or more employees. However, that legislation failed to ban smoking in workplaces with fewer than five employees, providing only that employers must establish a smoke-free work area for nonsmokers wishing to use such an area. *Raised Bill 948* closes the existing loophole for these workplaces and furthers the original intent of the 2003 legislation—protecting the public’s health.

Second-hand smoke is responsible for causing a variety of ailments, including heart disease and cancer. Among adults, second-hand smoke exposure causes an estimated 46,000 heart disease deaths and 3,400 lung cancer deaths annually among adult nonsmokers in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Since people spend most of their waking hours at work, permitting smoking in workplaces poses particularly significant risks to employers and employees alike. There is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke.

As of January 10, 2011, there are 29 states, along with Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico, that have laws that prohibit smoking in *all* workplaces. Connecticut is one of only two New England states (the other is New Hampshire) that does not absolutely protect its workers from second-hand smoke. *All* employees deserve the same public health protections, irrespective of how many employees are in the workplace.

This is Connecticut’s opportunity to be a leader in public health, which is about *preventing* the costly and potentially disastrous health ailments that can arise from secondhand smoke exposure. As of 2008, the total annual excess cost of a smoking employee to a private employer exceeded \$4,000 per employee.<sup>2</sup> Those costs include excess healthcare costs, costs in lost productivity as a result of absenteeism and smoking breaks, and fire insurance. Eliminating the current exemption would not only promote the public’s health but would also retain and attract businesses to the state.

In sum, CADH supports *Raised Bill 884* to protect innocent employees from the dangers of second-hand smoke and to promote the health of such Connecticut employees.

CADH is a nonprofit organization comprised of Connecticut’s 77 local health departments and districts. Since its incorporation in 1996, CADH has and continues to convene, engage, mobilize, and support Connecticut’s local health departments and districts to strengthen and assure efficient and effective delivery of public health services. Local health directors are the statutory agents of the Commissioner of Public Health and are critical providers of essential public health services at the local level in Connecticut. Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Productivity Losses—United States, 2000–2004. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 2008;57(45):1226–8.

<sup>2</sup> Michah Berman and Rob Crane. Mandating a Tobacco-Free Workforce: A Convergence of Business and Public Health Interests. *William Mitchell Law Review*. 2008;34(4): 1658.