

Hello my name is Justin Kvadas. I am the person who proposed this bill to Henry Genga. I am writing you today in support of HB5380.

The bill deals with the very real issue of children being exposed to cigarette smoke while in a vehicle. These children end up exposed to secondhand smoke which is very damaging to a small child. The second hand smoke may even cause permanent harm to them. This second hand smoke can harm them for life and/or shorten their lifespan.

The truth is the dangers of secondhand smoke is worse for children. Not only is their body still developing, but their breathing rate is faster than a fully grown adult. Adults on average breathe between 14 to 18 times a minute. But a child breathes on average between 20 to 60 times a minute. As a result this means these young children are inhaling more of the toxic and deadly chemicals that are present in cigarette smoke. Plus, the children who breathe in secondhand smoke are more likely to suffer from dental cavities and ear infections.

I would also like to mention that a car is an extremely confined space in which the child is "trapped" in. Spending one hour in an extremely smoky room, like a car, means that the child is inhaling enough toxic chemicals to equal smoking 10 cigarettes.

An expert panel estimated nonsmokers' exposure to secondhand smoke at home or work

- increases their risk of heart disease by 25% to 30%
- it increases their risk of lung cancer by 20% to 30%
- it causes asthma or triggers asthma attacks in children and adults
- it also contributes to sudden infant death syndrome
- and it is responsible for 50,000 deaths each year in the United States.

These stunning facts published by the Harvard Medical School are shocking and show just how dangerous second hand smoke really is, as well as all the deaths that it causes yearly. The worst part is this could easily be stopped, but children who are trapped in a car with a parent who smokes don't know what the second hand smoke is doing to them and more often than not will not ask their parent to stop. However, with this bill those children will gain a voice and will be better protected against the dangers of secondhand smoke.

I urge you the transportation committee to think this over and hope that you will see it fit to pass this bill and help turn it into a law. Even the Connecticut public health department is urging people to not smoke around children because of all the dangers like the ones listed above. So, without your help in this matter children without a voice will continue to suffer through this and may become part of the statistic of 50,000 deaths that happen each year as a result of second hand smoke. Let's put an end to this and stop people from smoking in a car around young children.

Thank you for your time.