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Public Health Committee
March 15, 2013
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American Heart Association

SB 990 "AN ACT CONCERNING SMOKING POLICIES AND PROHIBITING SMOKING IN CERTAIN AREAS"

Senator Gerratana and Representative Johnson, and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for allowing me the time to discuss SB 990 – An Act Concerning Smoking Policies and Prohibiting Smoking in Certain Areas.

My name is John Bailey, State Director of Government Relations for the American Heart Association.

While we believe that SB990 is well intentioned and supports our efforts to remove the exemption from the Clean Indoor Air Act for businesses with fewer than five (5) employees we have reservations with this bill as written

2013 marks the 10 year anniversary of Connecticut's Clean Indoor Air Act and it is feared that as written the bill could have the unintended consequence of weakening this historic measure

The Clean Indoor Air Act has spared tens of thousands of Connecticut's workers and the general public from exposure of cancer causing secondhand smoke. The Act has also had the effect of discouraging the social acceptance of tobacco, and is reducing tobacco-related disease and deaths.

As many on this committee know, comprehensive smoke free laws lower cardiovascular disease incidence and significantly improve public health. Reducing smoking and exposure to second hand smoke is a health issue along with an economic issue. The annual health care burden in Connecticut directly caused by smoking equals \$1.63 billion. The portion covered by the state Medicaid program is \$430 million.

The effects of secondhand smoke are substantial and rapid. Secondhand smoke increases the risk of coronary heart disease by 30%. This effect is larger than one would expect on the basis of the risks associated with active smoking and the relative doses of tobacco smoke delivered to smokers and nonsmokers.¹

Because of the for mentioned reasons, American Heart Association supports the intent of the legislation to lower the threshold banning smoking in the workplace from five to one employee and ultimately lowering the exposure of the number of Connecticut workers who are exposed to second hand smoke.

The American Heart Association also supports the inclusion of electronic nicotine delivery systems into the definition of "smoking". Like the "light" and "low tar" cigarettes that tobacco companies claimed

were healthier for consumers, there is no evidence to back up the claims made by e-cigarette makers that their products are safer than normal cigarettes or asserting that they can help people to quit smoking.ⁱⁱ

Unfortunately, the bill as written will continue to allow separately enclosed and separately ventilated work areas to be permitted. The evidence base is clear that this strategy of allowing separately enclosed workplaces is neither practical nor possible and is not in the best interests of the public health or the health of the employees. The only acceptable solution would be to create truly 100% smokefree workplaces. For the American Heart Association to ultimately support SB 990 the bill would need to be amended to remove the smoking rooms provision all together.

The American Heart Association thanks you for your consideration of our comments.

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ⁱ Circulation. 2005; 111: 2684-2698

ⁱⁱ <http://www.lung.org/press-room/press-releases/e-cigarettes-action.html>