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March 11, 2015

Dear Esteemed Members of the Public Health Committee,

I am Bonnie Smith, Executive Director of ERASE, the Regional Action Council for substance abuse prevention and behavioral wellness, that serves East Hartford and 14 other communities east of the Connecticut River. I am here today as a public health professional, mother and as a child who was exposed to second-hand smoke in vehicles and I strongly support HB6285-No Smoking in Cars with Minors.

I won't take your time reiterating facts about second hand smoke's harmful effects on the body, fortunately in 2015, the majority of educated adults are aware of these dangers. Unfortunately, as I often say, knowledge is not behavior. Just because we are aware of the potential risks of choices we make, does not mean we make the healthy choice for ourselves or for those we are responsible for, our children or grandchildren. Smoking cigarettes is a deadly, highly addictive habit. Those who are addicted to cigarettes have fewer places where smoking is legal and socially acceptable. One of the few remaining places that it remains legal to smoke is in one's personal vehicle. However, when children are involved this is entirely unfair. Children in vehicles with a smoker have no choice but to be exposed to second hand smoke. They are so close to the smoker in this confined space, it is almost as though they are smoking the cigarette themselves. I am not a believer in infringing on the public right's and personal freedom's, but no one should have the legal opportunity to expose a minor to second hand smoke in such a confined space. It is a child's right to have minimal second hand smoke exposure, HB6285-is a responsible action step for children's' rights.

I hope you support HB6285. Thank you for your time today. Please don't hesitate to contact me at 860.568.4442 or bonnie.smith@erasect.org.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bonnie Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bonnie Smith, MPH, CPH