

Testimony By:
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Proposed H.B. No. 6285 AN ACT CONCERNING SMOKING IN MOTOR
VEHICLES.

Good morning Ladies and Gentleman, Members of the Committee, Moms and Dads. My name is Cassandra Barrow and I am a Senior at Daniel Hand High School in Madison. This morning I am presenting support to a bill that is common sense. The legislation is "An act concerning smoking in motor vehicles", less affectionately known as proposed House Bill 6285. It would forbid adults from smoking in a vehicle with children fewer than sixty pounds or 6 years of age. The law would therefore apply to children under car seat requirements. Survey's recently released indicate that 82% of US adults already support the ideology of the bill. It is important to note that this would be a secondary violation, which means that an adult cannot be pulled over for the offence initially, but can be fined if the ban is infringed. Its purpose is to protect children who cannot protect themselves from the toxic affects of secondhand smoke.

Here are some of the facts of the well-documented dangers. There is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke, even if it's a brief introduction into the lungs according to the Surgeon General. Therefore, establishing a 100% smoke free environment is the only effective way to fully protect nonsmokers. In addition, the levels of particulate matter found in the vehicles, where adults had smoked, exceeded those levels described by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as "unhealthy and, hazardous" including children who's fragile lungs develop until age 7. Harvard, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the World Health Organization, American Lung Association, the US Surgeon General, and the EPA and along with countless other accredited organizations all agree after *years* of research that second hand smoke has a significant negative affect on one's health, again-particularly on young children. And no, opening a window does not produce safe conditions.

This issue needs to be addressed by the Public Health committee because it is a universal moral obligation adults have to prevent any physical harm from coming to a child. Connecticut has always lead the country in paying special legislative attention to protect children from preventable dangers. The precedent for the government protecting kids has already been set with policies like mandatory vaccinations, helmet guidelines, and car seat requirements. This ban to provide clean air is a basic necessity, and this happens to be a case where Public Health takes the prerogative over what some might consider private property.

Logistical issues are also a threat to this bill's passing, despite a clear medical need. Many people raise the same question, "how do the police enforce this?" The same concerns were raised about car seats, cell phone use, and even seatbelts. However, Connecticut Police Chiefs Association, begs to differ, and supports the bill along with Connecticut's Attorney General, George Jepsen. Furthermore, my hometown local Police Chief, Mr. Drumm, along with many members of his force, agree that enforcement is realistic. The safety of Connecticut's children is simply more important than petty issues some might have with logistics.

Additionally, numerous states around the country have already passed similar, if not stricter, version of this bill. East coast to west coast, Vermont to California adults are recognizing the need for this ban- And this acknowledgment is NOT limited to one side of the aisle. This bill will not require additional funding, but without it, the health of our young children will continue to be compromised.

This bill is personally important to me because it was handed down from a proceeding civics class. The dedication of students who have worked on this bill the past two years is a testament to how seriously kids recognize when other kids need help.

Thank you for your consideration of this nearly urgent bill, and support for the health and welfare for Connecticut's cherubs.