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March 1, 2016

Dear Esteemed Members of the Public Health Committee,

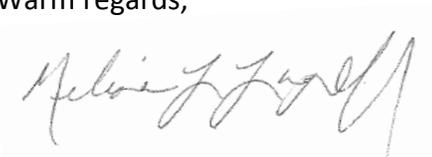
I am Melisa Luginbuhl, Executive Director of ERASE, the Regional Action Council for substance abuse prevention and behavioral wellness, that serves East Hartford and 14 other communities east of the Connecticut River. I am here today as a prevention professional and a mother. I strongly support HB5453-*AN ACT CONCERNING SMOKING IN MOTOR VEHICLES*

We are all well aware of how unhealthy and dangerous secondhand smoke is and the harmful effects on the body. But just because we are aware of the potential risks of the 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. Children in vehicles with a smoker have no choice but to be exposed to secondhand smoke. In fact, 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 secondhand smoke in such a confined space. It is a child's right to have minimal secondhand smoke exposure, HB5453-is a responsible action step for children's' rights.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) *"There is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke exposure; even brief exposure can be harmful to health. Since 1964, approximately 2,500,000 nonsmokers have died from health problems caused by exposure to secondhand smoke. In children, secondhand smoke causes ear infections, more frequent and severe asthma attacks, respiratory symptoms (for example, coughing, sneezing, and shortness of breath), respiratory infections (bronchitis and pneumonia) and a greater risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)."*

I hope you support HB5453. Thank you for taking the time to read this today. Please don't hesitate to contact me at 860.568.4442 or melisa.luginbuhl@erasect.org.

Warm regards,



Melisa L. Luginbuhl