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INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA – UAW

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Testimony by David Sherman  
UAW Local 2121 – Foxwood Casinos  
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Public Health Committee Public Hearing  
February 8, 2021

**IN SUPPORT OF HB 326: AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE OF FLAVORED CIGARETTES, TOBACCO PRODUCTS, ELECTRONIC NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND VAPOR PRODUCTS.**

Good Morning/Afternoon Chairwoman Abrams and the members of the Public Health Committee.

The 2006 U.S. Surgeon General's Report concluded that 100% smoke-free workplace policies are the only effective way to eliminate secondhand smoke exposure in the workplace. Even with the best ventilation systems, casino workers are significantly more exposed to toxic secondhand smoke than other workers across the state.

Currently in the United States, 87% of US adults are non-smokers which includes most people who frequent casinos. Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun are catering to the remaining 13% of the population who do smoke.

Imagine yourself leaving the Capitol Building and driving home and being stuck in rush hour traffic surrounded by trucks emitting diesel fumes. The air in casinos has 50 times more cancer-causing particles in the air than that rush hour traffic.

It has been proven that smoke-free laws have no effect on total gambling revenues or on the average revenue per machine. Secondhand smoke causes a variety of health complications including, lung and heart disease, emphysema, and cancer. As a result, workers miss time from work which affects the overall productivity of the casino.

On the advice of the scientific and medical community, casinos in the state have temporarily eliminated smoking to reduce transmission of the COVID-19 virus. Resuming smoking would put workers at risk of contracting future COVID viruses.

Now it is time to protect the rest of the workers! One of the toughest decisions facing lawmakers is trying to make laws which can be enforced at casinos. Many times, those working for sovereign nations, who are tax paying citizens, are an afterthought. As a result, these workers are subject to hazards which other workers across the state are not subject to. The job of the lawmakers is to protect ALL the workers in the state by providing a safe workplace free from secondhand smoke. It is time to stop catering to the minority and represent the majority of the population by making all casinos smoke-free. Thank you for your time.