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

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Testimony by George Taylor  
UAW Local 2121 – Foxwood Casinos  
United Auto Workers Region 9A

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.

Thank you for giving me this time to address this issue. My name is George Taylor, and I am a dealer at Foxwoods Resort Casino. I have been a dealer for over 26 years. I have been involved with the UAW from the beginning of our organizing drive and have participated in contract negotiations.

I have had several conversations regarding smoking in the casinos in CT with representatives and the attorney general. Banning smoking in casinos has been a priority for us since we organized, as well as in contract negotiations. While we have made small improvements in the ventilation system and establishing no smoking areas off the gaming floor on our own, the State Legislature has failed us!

Since enacting the CT Smoke Free Workplace Act, we at the casino have been left behind! Bar and restaurants complained that they would lose business, that they would not be able to survive, and those claims have been proven false.

The casinos were given an exception that effects the highest number of workers and patrons in the most confined area. This exception needs to end. It is well past the time to protect ALL workers in Connecticut!

We have been continuously sacrificed under the specter of lessened revenues out of fear that no-smoking policies would affect the bottom line negatively. Those fallacies have NEVER been proven. In fact, in many states those same fallacies have been debunked! Nearly half of all States that allow casino gambling are completely smoke free, including Maine & Massachusetts and more than half are smoke free or have designated smoking areas off the gaming floor.

It is quite pathetic and disgusting that it has taken a worldwide pandemic for us to finally be able to work in a smoke free environment, albeit “temporarily” as I hear continuously announced over the PA at work. It is far past time to make it permanent. Even National Tribal

leaders are pushing for this to happen in Tribal Casinos in a radio/webinar series “Tribal Support for Smoke Free Air.”

Over these past 8+ months working in a smokeless environment, I have noticeable improvements in my personal health. Secondhand smoke is a deadly contagion that cannot be effectively contained or ventilated out, and it needs to be eliminated. There are an infinite number of facts and scientific studies to back this up which I will leave to my fellow speakers to address.

Thank you for allowing me to address you today on this very important topic.