

General Law Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5305

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING TOBACCO BARS.

Vote Date: 2/16/2021

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 1/28/2021

File No.: 8

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

General Law

REASONS FOR BILL:

Tobacco bars will be allowed to let patrons to be able to smoke inside their facilities. The motivation behind this change is due to current laws that prohibit such actions within such facilities. Additional tobacco bars that hold alcoholic liquor permits that begin operating on or after October 1, 2021 will be allowed if they meet the following requirements.

1. Located in a stand-alone building or connected to another building with their own heating, ventilation or air conditioning system.
2. Contain a walk in humidor on the premises
3. Generate 51% or total annual gross income on onsite tobacco product sales and humidor rentals.

Tobacco bars cannot be located within a 5 mile radius of any existing tobacco bar and indoor vaping cannot be located within a 3 mile radius of any existing tobacco bars unless municipal zoning allows it.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Representative Jason Perillo supports the bill. This a pro-business bill and will enable tobacco bars to expand or encourage additional bars to open in the state. This will not encourage smoking young people to be introduced to smoking as by tobacco bars serve alcohol.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

American Cancer Society strongly opposes the bill. Smoking kills more people each year in Connecticut than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, accidents, murders, and suicides combined. The only way to protect workers and customers from the dangers of tobacco is by creating 100% smoke free environments. This bill sends a terrible message and normalizes smoking and nicotine addiction.

American Lung Association opposes the bill. Creating more places where smoking is allowed especially with the link between COVID-19 is clear as presented in our testimony. It is time to close loopholes not open up additional loopholes. The bill proposed will roll back our smoke free laws.

American Heart Association opposes the bill. This bill would be a detriment to the health of Connecticut citizens. Smoking is associated with staggering monetary costs in annual health care. With the passing of Tobacco 21 Ct. has shown great leadership in the fight to protect our youth from tobacco addiction but we still need to regulate online tobacco sales and oppose this bill.

Owl Shop, LLC finds this bill will exempt bona fide tobacco lounges and opposes the bill. The October 2,2021 establishment date would stop bona fide tobacconists who have been business for years from becoming a tobacco bar. More tobacco bars would open up throughout the state. By including the work cigarettes in the definition permits all cigarette outlets to apply for a tobacco bar license. The state should license only bona fide tobacco lounges and not amend the grandfather clause exemption.

Reported by: Pamela Bianca

Date: 02/24/2021