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Smokefree advocates make their case about “life and death” legislation before House committee

Vote on House Bill 4163 anticipated later this month

Lansing, Mich. – Advocates for smokefree workplaces made their case today before the House Commerce Committee when they testified on House Bill 4163 and urged its immediate passage. Under the substitute language offered, HB 4163 would create smokefree workplaces statewide, including restaurants and bars.

The Campaign for Smokefree Air (CSA) has been working with lawmakers in the House and Senate to make Michigan the 31st state to embrace smokefree air and protect all workers from exposure to the dangerous toxins in secondhand smoke. Thirty other states have comprehensive smokefree workplace policies and more than half of Americans now live in a city or state with smokefree workplace protection laws.

“This hearing means a great deal to the Campaign for Smokefree Air and the many Michigan residents that support keeping workers and business patrons safe,” said Judy Stewart, campaign manager for CSA. “We are thankful for the opportunity given to us today by Rep. Meisner. Lawmakers need to take notice of their constituents’ consistent demand for smokefree air and pass comprehensive, statewide legislation.”

The House Commerce Committee today listened as lawmakers, doctors, and victims of secondhand smoke gave their testimonies on why Michigan should go smokefree.

“Being exposed to secondhand smoke is a serious health hazard and we should care about the environments in which our constituents work and spend their time,” said Rep. Brenda Clack, D-Flint. “Secondhand smoke doesn’t obey non-smoking signs because it knows no boundaries. Michigan’s hard workers and their families deserve to breathe clean, healthy, smokefree air while at work and while dining.”

A statewide poll showed that nearly two-thirds of Michigan registered voters favor a new law creating smokefree environments in all Michigan workplaces. The poll also found that nearly 80 percent of Michigan registered voters said they would be more likely or just as likely to patronize their favorite restaurants if they went smokefree.

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Sen. Ray Basham (D-Taylor), Sen. Tom George (R-Texas Township) also are sponsoring bills to make workplaces smokefree, including restaurants, bars, factories, hospitals and more. Senate Bills 109 and 110 are awaiting Senate committee action.

“The people of Michigan have been waiting too long for the Legislature to take action,” said Basham, who has been pushing this initiative for more than 10 years. “The government has numerous regulations in place to protect people at work and yet we are letting this serial killer roam our offices, restaurants and factory floors unchecked. It’s ridiculous.”

The committee did not take a vote today however a vote is anticipated on HB 4163 later this month.

Testimonies Given

- **Rep. Brenda Clack**, D-Flint
- **Sen. Raymond Basham**, D-Taylor
- **Dr. Kenneth Warner**, Director, University of Michigan Tobacco Research Network
- **Dr. Ronald Davis**, President elect of the American Medical Association
- **Dr. Greg Holzman**, Chief Medical Officer, Michigan Department of Community Health
- **Mark Bertler**, Executive Director, Michigan Association for Local Public Health
- **Michelle Thurman**, co-owner with ex-NHL player Dino Ciccarelli of Club 22, Shelby Twp.
- **Daniel Haberman**, owner of The Bosco bar, in Ferndale
- **Sharice Pulman**, Director, American Diabetes Association and asthma sufferer
- **Phil Moilenan**, Chairman of the Board, American Cancer Society
- **Carrie Klein**, lost her sister to cancer caused by exposure to secondhand smoke
- **Bill Barnes**, cancer survivor; members of House Commerce Committee

About CSA

The Campaign for Smokefree Air is a grassroots coalition with more than 155 members, including leadership from the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association of Michigan, Michigan Hospital Association and Michigan State Medical Society, as well as other statewide groups that support making workplaces, including restaurants and bars, smokefree. For more information about the Campaign for Smokefree Air, please visit www.MakeMIAirSmokefree.org.

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