



February 6, 2024

Representative Landwehr, Chair  
House Committee on Health and Human Services  
HB 2622- Proponent

Chair Landwehr,

The American Heart Association supports HB 2622, which would eliminate the loophole in Kansas' Clean Indoor Air Act (CIAA) that allows for smoking in casinos and gaming floors. We applaud the committee for hearing this legislation to ensure that casino workers have access to a safe and healthy workplace. We urge the committee to pass the bill as it is currently written with no amendments.

The scientific evidence is clear: there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke causes serious diseases and premature death among nonsmokers. That's why all workplaces and public places, including restaurants, bars and casinos should be smoke-free. Everyone should have the right to breathe clean air.

Cigarette smoking is responsible for more than 480,000 deaths annually in the United States; more than 41,000 of these deaths result from secondhand smoke exposure.<sup>i</sup> Numerous studies over the years have found that secondhand smoke exposure is a risk factor for cardiovascular diseases, stroke, cancer and other chronic health conditions.

For example, in 2010, the Surgeon General released a report entitled *How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking Attributable Disease*. The report found that even low levels of smoke exposure, including secondhand smoke exposure, lead to dysfunction and inflammation of the blood vessels, which can lead to heart disease and stroke.<sup>ii</sup>

A year earlier, in 2009, the Institute of Medicine released a report, *Secondhand Smoke Exposure and Cardiovascular Effects: Making Sense of the Evidence*,<sup>iii</sup> that included the following findings:

- "The committee concludes that there is a causal relationship between smoking bans and decreases in acute coronary events.
- "The evidence reviewed by the committee is consistent with a causal relationship between secondhand-smoke exposure and acute coronary events, such as acute MI (myocardial infarction)."
- "The committee concludes that it is biologically plausible for a relatively brief exposure to secondhand smoke to precipitate an acute coronary event." According to the report, experimental studies have found

that secondhand smoke exposure causes adverse changes in the cardiovascular system that increase the risk of a heart attack.<sup>iii</sup>

The State of Kansas enacted CIIA in 2010 to protect workers from the dangers of secondhand smoke. Smoking was prohibited in almost all indoor public places, including bars and restaurants. However, the law includes a loophole that allows for smoking in casinos, denying casino workers the protections that all other workers in the state enjoy. The Kansas Legislature has an opportunity to correct this injustice by eliminating that loophole and providing a healthy work environment for those who work in casinos. No one should have to choose between their health and providing for their family.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,  
Kari Rinker

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<sup>i</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014 [accessed 2018 Feb 22].

<sup>ii</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking Attributable Disease: A Report of the Surgeon General. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2010.

<sup>iii</sup> Institute of Medicine (IOM), Secondhand Smoke Exposure and Cardiovascular Effects: Making Sense of the Evidence, Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2009, <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2009/Secondhand-Smoke-Exposure-andCardiovascular-Effects-Making-Sense-of-the-Evidence.aspx>.