

LETTER TO THE EDITOR SAMPLE #2

The strongest letters to the editor explain who you are and why you care about smoke-free workplaces and the dangers of secondhand smoke. The letter can come from a member of the public health or business communities, but often the most influential letters are submitted by community members who simply care about their health and that of their friends and families.

- *State why this issue is important to you.*
- *Include personal stories: Have you been affected by secondhand smoke? Has the law that exists today affected you? If all workplaces were smoke-free, would you go out to hear music in bars again? Are there still indoor public events that are so smoky that you won't take your kids there? Is your own workplace smoke-free? Whatever your story is, share it!*
- *Share your letter with friends, family and co-workers and encourage them to submit their own.*
- *Use this letter as an example only.*

[DATE]

To the Editor -

It is time North Dakota took a historic stand to protect citizens and workers from the serious health hazards of secondhand smoke. And the need for protection from secondhand smoke has never been clearer. The city of Pueblo, Colorado saw a 41 percent decrease in heart attack hospitalizations from their smoke-free ordinance. The writing is on the wall: secondhand smoke has a huge impact on our health. We all have the right to earn a living or enjoy a night out without being exposed to toxic secondhand smoke.

In 2005, North Dakota made great strides in protecting the public and workers, and the people of Bismarck, Fargo and West Fargo have spoken and are protecting workers and the public from the dangers of secondhand smoke with some strong measures. It is time to complete the circle and protect all of North Dakota's workers. Each year, 80-140 people die in North Dakota from secondhand smoke exposure. We need to make sure that all public places - including bars - do not endanger the lives of guests and workers.

The Surgeon General has found that there is no safe level of exposure. Comprehensive smoke-free policies are the only effective way to protect nonsmokers from secondhand smoke.

Beyond the health benefits of a truly smoke-free state, it is also clear that businesses have nothing to fear. Dozens of studies and hard economic data have shown that state, county, and city smoke-free laws don't harm restaurant and bar sales or employment levels, and can have a positive impact. A study on the effects of the Bismarck smoking ordinance showed an increase in restaurant revenue in the city since the ordinance went into place in 2005. In the year after New York City's smoke-free law took effect in 2003, business receipts for restaurants and bars increased and employment rose. And clearly, businesses in Fargo and West Fargo are optimistic about the positive economic impact of their new laws.

North Dakota has nothing to fear from protecting everyone from secondhand smoke and everything to gain.

Thank you.

[NAME]

[TITLE]

[AGENCY/SMOKE-FREE COALITION]