

1. Protect All Employees from Secondhand Smoke at Work and in Public Places

Every Employee Has the Right to a Smoke-Free Workplace

No one should have to risk their life to keep a job. Every workplace – including restaurants, bars, government buildings, bowling alleys, and other public places – should be smoke-free. Smokers are free to continue to smoke—as long as they don't expose others involuntarily to cancer-causing chemicals. When one person's right to engage in certain behaviors conflicts with another person's right not to be harmed, limits have generally been placed on the harmful behavior.

Every year secondhand smoke causes 35,000 deaths in the U.S.¹ In North Carolina, more than 1,700 adults, children and babies die each year from others people's smoke.²

As little as 30 minutes of exposure to secondhand smoke can trigger a heart attack in someone with heart disease or risk factors for heart disease.³

Smoke-Free Laws Save Money and Don't Hurt Business

In addition to saving lives, smoke-free policies save health care costs. A recent study in Pueblo, Colorado found the rate of heart attacks declined 41% after a smoke-free law went into effect. Not only did fewer people have heart attacks, but it also had a rippling effect on the decline of public and private health care costs.⁴

Tobacco use costs North Carolina taxpayers \$2.46 billion in direct healthcare costs (\$769 million in Medicaid expenses alone), and \$3.3 billion in lost productivity annually.⁵

Smoke-free restaurants can expect to save about \$190 per 1,000 square feet each year in lower cleaning and maintenance costs.⁶ This adds up to savings of \$4 billion to \$8 billion per year nationwide.⁷

Studies show that smoke-free workplace laws have either a positive or neutral effect on business. In fact, no rigorous, scientifically conducted study has found negative economic impact from smoke-free policies.⁸

Even in North Carolina, the number one tobacco producing state in the nation, smoke-free policies did not hurt business.⁹

Most North Carolinians Want Smoke-Free Workplaces and Public Places

Nine out of 10 North Carolinians agree that all employees should be able to work in a smoke-free environment.¹⁰

2. Raise the Tax on Tobacco Products

Kids Smoke Less When Tobacco Costs More

Raising NC's cigarette tax by \$1.00 will decrease smoking among youth by 17%, preventing the tobacco addiction of 89,500 of North Carolina's youth. It will also reduce smoking among North Carolina adults, helping 59,500 people quit smoking, and saving the lives of 44,400 North Carolinians from a premature smoking-caused death.¹¹

North Carolina has the 5th lowest cigarette tax in the nation. The national average is \$1.19. North Carolina's tax rates on other tobacco products (OTPs) is also well below the national average.¹²

Raising the Tax Saves Health Care Costs and Raises Revenue¹³

Raising the cigarette tax by \$1.00 will generate 5-year health care savings of \$22.6 million from smoking-affected pregnancies and births, \$34 million in heart attacks and strokes, contributing to an overall savings of \$2.1 billion from preventable illness and death.

Raising North Carolina's cigarette tax by \$1.00 will generate an additional \$329 million in new revenue in the first year.

3. Increase Funding for Tobacco Prevention & Control

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that North Carolina spend \$106.8 million a year to have an effective, comprehensive tobacco prevention program.¹⁴

North Carolina's 2009 annual funding is \$18.5 million a year for tobacco prevention and control, less than one-third the recommended amount.¹⁵

North Carolina ranks 32nd among the states in the funding of tobacco prevention programs.

References

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- ¹¹ "Benefits to North Carolina from Adjusting its Tax Rates for Other Tobacco Products to Match the State's Tax Rate for Cigarettes" Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Prepared January, 2009. Additional and more detailed information can be found at: <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0180.pdf>
- ¹² "Trends in Average State Cigarette Tax Rates" Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, downloaded October 27, 2008, at: <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0211.pdf>
- ¹³ "Benefits from a \$1.00 Cigarette Tax Increase in North Carolina" Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Prepared February 4, 2009. Figures account for the 61.66 federal cigarette tax effective April 1, 2009. Additional and more detailed information can be found at: <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0281.pdf>.
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