

LATE

From: Nora Usita, RN <nusita.metrocare@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 06, 2016 6:14 AM
To: CPH Testimony
Subject: Strong Support for SB 2692, Relating to Tax Rate for Tobacco Products

Categories: Late

Date: February 6, 2016

To: The Honorable Rosalyn Baker, Chair
The Honorable Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health

Re: Strong Support of SB 2692, Relating to Tax Rate for Tobacco Products

Hrg: February 6, 2016 at 9:00am at Capitol Room 229

I STRONGLY SUPPORT SB 2692, which would raise the tax from 70% to 80% on the wholesale price of "other tobacco products" (OTP), excepting only large cigars.

Tobacco taxes are a proven strategy to reduce smoking, particularly among teenagers and low-income people. Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease and death in the U.S. Serious health conditions like cancer, gum disease, and cardiovascular disease caused by snuff and chew will be reduced, saving lives and taxpayer dollars in Hawai'i. Tobacco use costs our state \$526 million annually.

Increasing the tax on OTPs discourages youth from using tobacco products as youth are more sensitive to prices than adults. We must ensure that taxes on all tobacco products are equitable so that those who are addicted to nicotine will be incentivized to quit instead of turning to other products. Hawai'i has been leading the way in tobacco control, and this bill will continue to champion our efforts in being a vanguard state in the nation.

I strongly support SB 2692 and ask you to pass this measure out of committee.

Mahalo,

Nora Usita, RN
170 Aikane circle
Hilo, HI 96720

LATE

From: Patricia Blair <patriciablair@msn.com>
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 3:23 PM
To: CPH Testimony
Subject: Strong Support for SB 2692, Relating to Tax Rate for Tobacco Products

Categories: Late

Date: February 6, 2016

To: The Honorable Rosalyn Baker, Chair
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I strongly support SB 2692 and ask you to pass this measure out of committee.

Mahalo,

Patricia Blair
522 Uluhala St.
Kailua, HI 96734

LATE

From: Courtney Voss <courtney@hiphi.org>
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 3:30 PM
To: CPH Testimony
Subject: Strong Support for SB 2692, Relating to Tax Rate for Tobacco Products

Categories: Late

Date: February 6, 2016

To: The Honorable Rosalyn Baker, Chair
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I strongly support SB 2692 and ask you to pass this measure out of committee.

Mahalo,

Courtney Voss
850 Richards Street
Haleiwa, HI 96712

LATE

From: Jermy Domingo <jermy@hawaii.edu>
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 3:35 PM
To: CPH Testimony
Subject: Strong Support for SB 2692, Relating to Tax Rate for Tobacco Products

Categories: Late

Date: February 6, 2016

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I strongly support SB 2692 and ask you to pass this measure out of committee.

Mahalo,

Jermy Domingo
91-1036 Koka St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

LATE

From: Patricia Fleck <pat.fleckconsulting@hawaiiantel.net>
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 4:05 PM
To: CPH Testimony
Subject: Strong Support for SB 2692, Relating to Tax Rate for Tobacco Products
Categories: Late

Date: February 6, 2016

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I strongly support SB 2692 and ask you to pass this measure out of committee.

Mahalo!

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Fleck

Patricia Fleck
77-215 Ho'owaiwai Court
Kailua Kona, HI 96740

LATE

From: Stephanie Moir <twinkle_toez54@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 5:01 PM
To: CPH Testimony
Subject: Strong Support for SB 2692, Relating to Tax Rate for Tobacco Products

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Mahalo,
Stephanie Moir

Stephanie Moir
Kukula St.
Waipahu, HI 96797

LATE

From: Lorrie Ann Santos <anelalani@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 5:15 PM
To: CPH Testimony
Subject: Strong Support for SB 2692, Relating to Tax Rate for Tobacco Products

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Mahalo,

Lorrie Ann Santos
45-415 Lolii Street
Kaneohe, HI 96744

LATE

From: Kirsten Ralston <Ksmithralston@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 5:18 PM
To: CPH Testimony
Subject: Strong Support for SB 2692, Relating to Tax Rate for Tobacco Products

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Mahalo,

Kirsten Ralston
PO box 10528
Honolulu, HI 96816

LATE

From: Mark Levin <levin@hawaii.edu>
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 5:54 PM
To: CPH Testimony
Subject: Strong Support for SB 2692, Relating to Tax Rate for Tobacco Products
Categories: Late

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Mahalo,

Mark Levin
2108 Hunnewell St.
Honolulu, HI 96822

LATE

From: Bryan Mih <bmih@hawaii.edu>
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 6:55 PM
To: CPH Testimony
Subject: Strong Support for SB 2692, Relating to Tax Rate for Tobacco Products

Date: February 6, 2016

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Mahalo,
Bryan Mih, MD MPH FAAP

Bryan Mih
1944 Naniu Pl
Honolulu, HI 96822

LATE

From: Nicole Xavier <nhxavier.16@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 8:39 PM
To: CPH Testimony
Subject: Strong Support for SB 2692, Relating to Tax Rate for Tobacco Products

Date: February 6, 2016

To: The Honorable Rosalyn Baker, Chair
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Mahalo,

Nicole Xavier
Kapolei High School

Nicole Xavier
92-320 Kiowao Pl.
Kapolei, HI 96707

LATE

E. Yadao
POB 861
LIHUE, HI 96766

February 5, 2016

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION to SB2692

Description:

Imposes an excise tax equal to eighty per cent of the wholesale price of any tobacco product, other than large cigars, sold by a wholesaler or dealer on and after January 1, 2017, whether or not sold at wholesale, or if not sold then at the same rate upon the use by the wholesaler or dealer. Requires the additional moneys collected under the excise tax to be deposited to the credit of the Hawaii cancer research special fund.

Committee Members,

The language in **SB2692** is so poorly written, it is unintelligible. Please kill this bill and stop falling prey to unceasing demands of the Hawaii cancer research organization for more money *from victims*.

What can be gleaned from this bill is that it's **predatory**. Very similar to predatory loaning and predatory interest rates. It causes financial hardship on people that are essentially victims and this legislature, in all its fanfare with Quit-Smoking billboards, smoking cessation funds, etc. has done very little to genuinely assist people that want to quit smoking: merely perfunctory to justify accepting the hikes. You do realize the exorbitant cost of cigarettes created an adverse effect on smokers: higher anxiety and a powerful need to smoke more to counteract the anxiety. But I suppose that's a plus for your revenue drive. It has been discovered that those billboards are actually subliminally designed to encourage smoking. It is also a fact that the Quit-Smoking revenues from taxes have been repeatedly diverted to other uses, none of which are to help smokers.

Campaigners for higher cigarette taxes are vociferous in light of rampant indisputable death and destruction that occurs from alcohol use and seemingly have not protested with the same fervor as that of anti-smokers. I really have to ask why that is. Let us be clear, these tax hikes are singling out smokers under thinly disguised reasons of health benefits and smoking cessation but the bottom line is gouging smokers for collecting

revenue. You, personally, may detest smoking (because it's stinky?) but I, personally, detest alcohol consumption and fear its consequences. Do you fear consequences from smokers that might cross into your highway lane because they've had too many cigarettes? No, you don't.

These continuous tax hikes are personal attacks targeting a class of people that are victims of the predatory organizations and legislatures trying to make up for shortfalls seeking their cuts of the tax hikes; and that's not even including the tobacco industry. Because you consume alcohol and wouldn't think of raising tax on alcohol 'products', how discriminatory and predatory is it that tobacco, under a so-called sin tax such as alcohol is also, is exploited more? I didn't find one single bill to raise tax on alcohol!

A regressive tax is a tax imposed in such a manner that the decreases as the amount subject to taxation increases. "Regressive" describes a distribution effect on income or expenditure, referring to the way the rate progresses from high to low, so that the average tax rate exceeds the marginal tax rate. In terms of individual income and wealth, a regressive tax imposes a greater burden (relative to resources) on the poor than on the rich: there is an inverse relationship between the tax rate and the taxpayer's ability to pay, as measured by assets, consumption, or income. These taxes tend to reduce the tax burden of the people with a higher ability to pay, as they shift the relative burden increasingly to those with a lower ability to pay. If the activity being taxed is more likely to be carried out by the poor and less likely to be carried out by the rich, the tax may be considered regressive.

I do not see the numbers to back up the claims you have made in this bill as to the increasing impact on health care services nor the evidence for your claim that higher tax reduces smoking.

Taking into consideration all other taxes on tobacco, the picture is even more predatory:

The 156 percent increase in the federal excise tax on cigarettes -- approved last week by the Senate Finance Committee -- is being billed by some as a 'win-win' situation, said the parent company of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco.

But here's what's wrong with it, Reynolds American Inc. said:

First, most of the people who will pay the higher cigarette tax earn less than the people who will get free government health care.

According to Reynolds American, the median household income of an American smoker is about \$35,000. Yet under current congressional proposals, families making up to \$82,000 could become eligible for the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

"Why should lower-income people pay for free insurance for middle- or upper-middle-class earners?" Reynolds American asked in a news release. Load falls on poor to reduce taxes for richest.

According to a survey by researchers at RTI International, higher cigarette taxes may be financially hurting low-income smokers rather than making them more likely to quit.

*The survey, which looked at more than 13,000 people living in New York state, found that lower-income smokers in the state spent nearly a quarter of their household income on cigarettes compared with an average 2 percent spent by wealthier New York smokers. **But even with the higher taxes, the state has not seen a decline in lower-income smokers over the last decade, according to RTI, a non-profit research group that received funding from the New York State Department of Health for the survey.***

"Excise taxes are effective in changing smokers' behavior," Matthew Farrelly, chief scientist and senior director of RTI's public health policy research program, and study author, said in a statement. "But not all smokers are able to quit, and low-income smokers are disproportionately burdened by these taxes."

Let's at least be honest in legislative language; higher taxing on tobacco is not to discourage smoking and it is a direct hit on lower income people that may end up choosing between rent and cigarettes. It causes financial hardship on the wrong class of people: **the true victims.**

Please KILL this BILL and find more creative ways to seek revenues instead of preying on smokers.

LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 9:42 PM
To: CPH Testimony
Cc: devin@pcgamerzhawaii.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2692 on Feb 6, 2016 09:00AM*

SB2692

Submitted on: 2/5/2016

Testimony for CPH on Feb 6, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Devin Wolery	Individual	Oppose	Yes

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, February 05, 2016 9:39 PM
To: CPH Testimony
Cc: justin@pcgamerzhawaii.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB2692 on Feb 6, 2016 09:00AM

SB2692

Submitted on: 2/5/2016

Testimony for CPH on Feb 6, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Justin Wolery	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments: DO NOT PASS this absurd tax on vaping related products! There is ZERO evidence vaping devices cause cancer or other health effects and in fact are THE NUMBER ONE MOST EFFECTIVE SMOKING CESSATION DEVICE. This insanity needs to STOP. If these laws pass 2 of the nations largest vaping device online retailers will move out of the state of hawaii to arizona or colorado and most of the other local shops will go out of business as consumers continue to buy online. ALL YOU ARE DOING IS KILLING THE LOCAL ECONOMY STOP! Vaping devices are already just as expensive and in most cases MORE EXPENSIVE then smoking.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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