

April 29, 2013

To: Rep. Greenlick, Chair; Rep. Keny-Guyer & Rep. Thompson, Vice-Chairs
Members of the House Health Care Committee

From: Christina Skellenger, Portland, Ore.

Re: SB 444 A, Relating to smoking in a motor vehicle when minor present

My name is Christina Skellenger and I live in Portland. I am writing today as a citizen in support of Senate Bill 444 A.

My father smoked from age 18 on, with only intermittent periods when he tried to quit. During this time he would smoke both in the house and in the car. I can't really remember a time during my childhood when we were in the car and he wasn't smoking. He would roll the window down about an inch thinking it would pull the smoke out of the car and away from us, but we could always smell the smoke. When we complained he would continue to argue that the smoke was leaving the car through the crack in the window. Clearly this wasn't the case.

My dad was a good father, but he just wasn't well informed about the dangers of smoking to both himself and his family. Not only did he put our health at risk by smoking, he put our safety at risk as well, given he only had one hand on the wheel at all times. His left hand always had a cigarette, and therefore, was not available to help drive the vehicle.

Once he finished his cigarette he would either put it out in the car, leaving mounds of used cigarettes in the ash tray and on the floor for us to smell, or he would throw the cigarette out the window, littering the street and causing a potential fire hazard.

In closing, I support Senate Bill 444 A for three reasons: 1) smoking in the car causes needless smoke exposure to children, 2) smoking in a car poses a traffic safety risk, as one hand holds a cigarette versus a steering wheel, and 3) smoking in a car creates litter and potential fire hazards as cigarettes are discarded along our streets.

This bill would help educate parents, like my dad, about the dangers of secondhand smoke to their kids when traveling in a vehicle. I strongly support a ban on smoking with children present in the car. It is the right thing to do.

With Highest Regards,

Christina Skellenger