

February 8, 2022

Chair Prusak, Vice Chairs Hayden and Salinas, and Members of the House Health Care Committee,

My name is Akash Singh and I am writing on behalf of the Union of Concerned Scientists, an organization dedicated to the use of sound science in public policy. UCS is proud to be supported by more than 10,000 Oregonians, including over 500 professionals who are a part of our Science Network. I am writing in support of HB 4101, a measure to increase protections from secondhand smoke.

Secondhand smoke contains more than 70 carcinogens. In non-smoking adults alone, secondhand smoke causes approximately 34,000 premature heart disease-related fatalities, 7,300 lung cancer fatalities, and increases the risk of developing cardiovascular disease by more than 25%. Exposure to secondhand smoke can cause significant health and developmental impairments in children, including proper lung development and function, ear infections, and the frequency and severity of asthma attacks. Secondhand smoke exposure also contributes to existing environmental and public health disparities in the United States. Americans who are Black, low-income, work in “blue collar” industries, and or live in multi-unit housing are at a disproportionate risk.¹

For these reasons alone, HB 4101’s proposal to increase distance in certain public places of employment where an individual may not smoke, aerosolize, or vaporize inhalant from 10 to 25 feet is a reasonable, data-supported approach to reducing the harms caused by secondhand smoke.

I urge you to pass HB 4101 and create a healthier environment for all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

Akash Singh, JD
Western States Policy Advocate
Union of Concerned Scientists

¹ The data and figures used in this letter are from the Secondhand Smoke fact Sheet published by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and it can be found here: https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/general_facts/index.htm."