

Rhode Island Chapter

INCORPORATED IN RHODE ISLAND

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



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Testimony in support of House Bill 5464

House Finance Committee

April 10, 2025

Dear Chairperson Abney and Members of the Committee,

The Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics **strongly supports H5464**, which will repeal the exemption granted to pari mutual facilities and casinos from the smoke free workplace requirement.

Indoor tobacco use can cause significant harm to those exposed through secondhand and thirdhand tobacco smoke exposure. Secondhand exposure has been shown to cause effects on the cardiovascular system, coronary heart disease, and lung cancer in adults.¹ In children, tobacco exposure can increase the risk of sudden infant death syndrome, ear infections, more severe asthma, and other respiratory symptoms.² Furthermore, pregnant women who are exposed to secondhand smoke are 23% more likely to experience stillbirth and 13% more likely to have a child with a congenital malformation.³

Exposure to secondhand smoke cannot be fully controlled by separating smokers and nonsmokers, air cleaning or mechanical air exchange.¹ The Surgeon General's report concluded that smoking bans in workplaces, restaurants, bars, and offices substantially reduces secondhand smoke exposure.¹ The report also highlighted that smoke free policies and regulations do not have an adverse economic impact on the hospitality industry.¹

It's clear that there is no safe level of exposure to tobacco. Eliminating tobacco use from all indoor spaces is the only way to fully protect those in our community from these known harms. **We urge you to pass H5237.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allison".

Allison Heinly, MD, FAAP

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¹ Office on Smoking and Health (US). The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US); 2006.

² Groner, J. A, et al. (2015). Public policy to protect children from tobacco, nicotine, and tobacco smoke. *Pediatrics*, 136(5), 998-1007.

³ Leonardi-Bee, J, et al. (2011). Secondhand Smoke and Adverse Fetal Outcomes in NonSmoking Pregnant Women: A Meta-analysis. *Pediatrics*, 127(4), 734-741.