

February 15, 2005

To: Montana Representative Arlene Becker & the House Human Services Committee

My name is Laura Fox from Missoula, MT. I'm here to speak on behalf of my husband, Dan Fox, who passed away 6 years ago this March, and for all the other defenseless people who are being exposed to secondhand smoke.

My husband, Dan, was a non-smoker. We were shocked when he was diagnosed with small-cell lung cancer. This type cancer is found almost exclusively (98 to 99%) in people who smoke. Due to this fact, Dan's doctors believe his cancer was the result of breathing secondhand smoke.

Dan's first exposure to cigarette smoke began as a child living with a parent who was a heavy smoker. His heaviest exposure to secondhand smoke occurred while working for the State of Montana in an office that allowed both coworkers and clients to smoke. This was for a period of seven years.

At the time of his diagnosis, Dan was a very fit mountain climber, runner and health conscious person. He was my high school sweetheart, a wonderful father to our son, Alan, had earned his doctorate in Psychology from the University of Montana, and was a well-respected employee for the State of Montana.

For 3 years, 3 months Dan fought for his life. On March 20, 1999 Dan passed away at age 47.

Garon Smith, a well-known Chemistry professor at the University of Montana gave a lecture regarding pollutants in our environment. He stated, "Genetics loads the gun, environment pulls the trigger". Do YOU know what YOUR genetic make-up is? Every time we breathe secondhand smoke, we are playing Russian roulette.

I'm here to tell you that the effect of secondhand smoke has a face attached to it. It's Dan's face. It's personal. And it's real.

The facts are clear – tobacco kills. There are many laws currently in effect to protect people's health. It's time Montana makes a stand against tobacco, and I'm asking for your help to make this happen.

Thank you for listening.

Laura Fox

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Missoula, MT