

EXHIBIT 22  
DATE 2-16-05  
HB 643

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Dear Representative Becker and Members of the House Human Services Committee:

My name is Linda Lee and I have worked in tobacco prevention for most of the last seven years. Today, I am "off the clock" and representing myself and my friends and relatives who have died from or are currently suffering from tobacco related illness.

You will hear plenty of information today about the science and the health effects of secondhand tobacco smoke, so I will not repeat that important information. Instead, I would like to tell you a short, but revealing story.

I don't think anyone in Montana aspires for our state to be like California, most of us are appalled at any reference of our state being influenced by that huge state to our west with a population and reputation so large their influence is felt around the country. Nonetheless, this story is about California.

My younger sister lived in California for the bulk of her four children's lives. They range in ages from 5 to 13. Just last year, the family moved from California to Arizona.

California has a reputation for having one of the most comprehensive tobacco prevention programs in the country. But, when it comes to tobacco prevention, what most of us know is that it was the first state to go completely smoke free. So, my sister's kids grew up not only with excellent tobacco prevention programs in their schools, but also they have experienced a cultural norm that treats tobacco smoke as the toxic substance it is and one to which no person should be exposed.

Soon after the family moved to Arizona, my sister told me of an experience they had going into a restaurant in Phoenix. She, her husband and the four kids enter the building and stand at the reception area and immediately, they can smell smoke. Before my sister can stop them, her three oldest children begin to make loud comments about the people they see smoking in the establishment. The kids are young and they are saying things like "Yuck Mom! Look at those people smoking over there!" "Mom, are we really going to eat here? This is gross!" "Don't they know they are not supposed to smoke in here!?"

Well, by the time my sister got the kids under control, most of the folks in the restaurant had heard her children's outcries. She was embarrassed and ushered her family out to find a place that was smoke free. As she tells the story now, though, she tells it with pride in her voice. My sister realizes that between the California law prohibiting tobacco use in public places, the great tobacco prevention program in California and her own attitude about tobacco, her children will not only never smoke, they are appalled at anyone who would smoke and expose others to the toxins.

This is a simple story of cultural norms. In California, they have the lowest tobacco use rate in the country. Their citizens are protected from secondhand tobacco smoke and their children have a dramatically lower rate of tobacco use. This is what we want for our children and families here in Montana, so we begin to see fewer and fewer people impacted by tobacco.

Thank you for your time and attention,  
Linda Lee