

Outline/Main Points For Letters-to-the-editor and Op/Eds on HB2

Tips:

- A letter-to-the-editor is short and can come from anyone in the community.
- An op/ed is longer, and is usually written by a community leader or someone with special expertise. Examples: Local health director, local physician, health educator, teen.
- Check with your local newspaper for word-limits on letters-to-the-editor and op/eds
- Letters-to-the-editor should be brief and make a limited number of points. They may be more likely to be printed if they refer to an article that previously appeared in the newspaper.
- Add personal stories and opinions to make your letter or op/ed piece stronger.
- Incorporate these statistics and points, but make them your own!

Facts:

House Bill 2, North Carolina's smoke-free restaurants and bars law, will go into effect at midnight on January 2, 2010. It will make all N.C. restaurants and bars smoke-free with very few exceptions.

Exceptions include: cigar bars that meet certain requirements and non-profit private clubs.

The U.S. Surgeon General has stated that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

The U.S. Institute of Medicine recently found that smoke-free laws significantly reduce the occurrence of heart attacks – and this benefit grows over time.

Important Points:

North Carolinians should celebrate this huge step forward in public health, as restaurant workers and patrons will now be protected from the well-documented health threats of secondhand smoke.

Citizens should make a point to support local restaurants and bars by patronizing them frequently over the next few weeks.

Consider participating in Tasty Tuesdays, by eating out weekly to support the local businesses that are complying with the new law.

Remember that while this is a great step for North Carolina, many workers are still unprotected from the hazards of secondhand smoke – especially those who work in private worksites, retail establishments and many other businesses that do not serve food and drink.

Eight out of ten North Carolina adults are non-smokers, so business establishments that have previously been avoided because of the presence of smoking may gain new customers.