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Should Smoking Be Banned in Workplaces?

As many cities are thinking of bans on smoking in public places, some cities located in the heavy tobacco-using states, will unquestionably be slower to change. The argument over the topic of whether smoking should be banned in the public is an ongoing issue between individual rights of smokers and non-smokers. However, smokers believe their unhealthy habit is a personal matter, but they do not realize the consequences for others . This is especially important in the workplace. Smoking can lead to critical health issues and other problems via secondhand smoke. Smoking in the workplace has a negative impact upon human physical, psychological, and social environments, therefore, smoking in the workplaces should not be permitted.

Employees have a right to a healthy workplace. The employer has a responsibility to provide a safe and healthy working atmosphere to their employees. While many employees decide to work in workplaces that allow smoking, that doesn't mean other employees in those workplaces prefer to be around smoke. They may persist in working there because they need jobs. A smoking ban opponent may merely say, "Work somewhere without smoke", but they forget that their insistence on allowing smoking in the workplace strongly impacts the health of others. It has been proven by public health officials that smoking in an open space causes significant negative health consequences. Secondhand smoke exposure is obviously associated with the negative outcomes on a person's health. According to a recent study published in a medical journal, they found that banning smoking in the workplace can help to reduce

secondhand smokers' heart attacks over time. The scientific evidence links secondhand smoke with heart disease and lung cancer for decades. This case becomes very difficult for smokers to make an argument that secondhand smoke exposure brings no health impacts for the breather, especially over time. The effects of temporary secondhand smoke exposure also pose other health problems to secondhand smokers--these include headaches and breathing problems. The secondhand smoker is an innocent person who receives numerous short-term and long-term health consequences.

In the workplaces where smoking is permitted, many of us find the smell of cigarettes to be unpleasant and very irritating. The lingering odor of stale cigarettes and cigarette butts detract from the beauty of healthy working and clean air from our environment. Cigarette smoke tends to linger on our clothes and hair. Its smell seems to take a long time to fade away. This causes a distraction to other employees and disturbs their rights to a healthy workplace environment. As a result, this may cause employees to suffer low performance. The cigarette butts issue poses another problem to the physical work environment--they account for million of pieces of litter annually. This might not be an issue if smokers would dispose of the waste properly, but many of them don't. The evidence is clear; cigarette butts are over the place surrounding the landscape and buildings. Therefore, a smoking ban would reduce litter, and promote a healthy work environment and physical activity in green spaces around working buildings.

The cost of environmental tobacco smoke is expensive. Without enacting a proper smoke restriction in the workplace, the employer ends up paying the high cost of health insurance of employees who smoke because of the high risk of health care costs. The employees themselves also pay the high health bills due to their smoking habit and the medical costs associated with smoking. In a workplace with no smoke-free policy, the employer finds that the company spends

more of the budget on the average premium of life insurance of smoking employees than non-smoking employees because of the short life expectancy of smokers. In addition, the company and employees pay the cost of the hidden price of smoking. They pay taxes for the states to beautify streets, buildings, and other public places that have been littered and damaged by smoking. With the tax revenue, they could do something better than fixing the problems that are caused by smoking. For instance, it could use this budget to improve or build new infrastructures including roads, hospitals, and school buildings, which are useful for social development. Smoking appears costly to every party in society, especially businesses. Smoking has a negative impact to everyone in workplaces both directly and indirectly therefore, smoking should not be permitted in the workplace.

The way to get rid of harmful effects that are caused by secondhand smoke in the workplace is to actively promote a smoke-free policy; this is believed to be the only way to adequately protect employees' health and livelihood. A smoke-free environment provides a ton of advantages that employees and employer would benefit from. It creates a safe and healthy environment for everyone in the workplace. It provides self-education to smokers to think about others and this may encourage and motivate them to cut down or quit cigarette consumption. Employers would benefit from this policy as direct healthcare costs and maintenance costs will be reduced when litter caused by smoking is eliminated in workplaces. It would be possible for the employer to negotiate lower life, health, and disability coverage if the number of employees smoking are decreased. This results in saving the company costs on employees' health insurance and this budget can be used for other programs that benefit both company and employees, for example, employee training or employee holiday trips. After the smoke-free environment is enacted in the workplace, there are many good things that would come after. For instance, a

better company image and customer satisfaction because employees tend to work harder and takes fewer sick days in non-smoking environment.

Smoking in the workplace is like putting the employees and employer at a great risk, especially the serious health consequences. The environmental tobacco smoke and cigarette butts cause great damage to the workplaces' landscape and buildings, and pollute the clean air in the offices. The secondhand smoke is costly to the company and its costs continue to rise over time since there is no proper smoking restriction law enacted. To get rid of these problems, smoking bans should be implemented to benefit non-smoking employees, and encourage smokers to reduce and quit. The extended law should continue to promote 100% smoke-free environment for employees to work in a healthy working atmosphere. I think we can contribute our support by promoting smoke-free environments in workplaces and helping others to understand that smoking should be banned.