

**LATE
TESTIMONY**

SB2422

**HTH, WAM
Committee Hearing
02/13/2012**

LATE



February 13, 2012
1:15 P.M.
Conference Room 229

To: Senate Committee on Health
Senator Josh Green M.D., Chair
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice-Chair

From: Hawaii Public Health Association
Christopher Lum Lee, Chair, Legislative Committee

Re: SB2422 RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Chair Green and Committee members:

The Hawaii Public Health Association is submitting this testimony in support of this measure. The tobacco industry has been the subject of much scrutiny over the last few decades- and rightfully so. Tobacco products have been proven to be a contributing factor to various types of illnesses and diseases. The Association also understands that currently the State's financial situation is not ideal and that revenues need to be generated in order to finance operations other than those within the scope of Public Health.

Enacting this measure provides the benefits of prevention and revenue generation. In the way of prevention, an increase in tax will raise the total price of the tobacco product, making the product less desirable to purchase. Hopefully, by reducing the desirability of this product, overall consumption will decrease. In the way of revenue generation, the increase in tax will undoubtedly increase the tax revenue base. Should a decrease in tobacco consumption result from this tax increase, it's possible that the tax revenue will exceed the monetary loss from the decline in tobacco sales or at least break-even.

This Association stands behind this measure and hopes that this Committee will continue to support and ultimately adopt this measure.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Christopher K.J. Lum Lee
Christopher K.J. Lum Lee, Chair
Hawaii Public Health Association Legislative Committee



LATE

**THE OFFICIAL SPONSOR
OF BIRTHDAYS.™**

February 12, 2012

Senate Committee on Health
Senator Joshua Green, M.D., Chair
Senator Clarence Nishihara, Vice Chair

Hearing:
State Capitol Room 229
February 13, 2012, 1:15 p.m.

SB 2422 - Relating to Tobacco Products

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 2422, which increases the tax on tobacco products, other than large cigars, to \$3.20 or 70% of the wholesale price, whichever is greater.

The American Cancer Society is the nationwide, community-based, voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from cancer, through research, education, advocacy, and service. Advocating for strong tobacco control laws to reduce the incidences of lung and other cancers is part of our mission.

This measure increases the tax on other tobacco products to bring that tax in line with the tax on cigarettes. Raising tobacco taxes reduces tobacco use, reduces death and disease from tobacco, reduces the health care costs associated with tobacco, and raises new revenue for the State.

Studies have shown that strong tobacco taxes reduce consumption. Low-income populations are four times more likely to quit smoking in response to cigarette price increases.¹ Because these particular populations bear a disproportionate burden of death and disease caused by tobacco, they would obtain substantial health benefits from quitting.² Further, low-income and minority youth are less likely to start smoking as a result of a cigarette price increase than other youth.

¹ See Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Responses to Increases in Cigarette Prices by Race/Ethnicity, Income, and AgeGroups—United States, 1976-1993. MMWR. 199847:605-609.

² See Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. State Medicaid Coverage for Tobacco Dependence Treatments—United States, 1998 and 2000. MMWR 2001;50(44):979-982.

Smoking remains the leading cause of cancer and health problems. We urge this committee to move this measure forward. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cory Chun". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Cory Chun
Government Relations Director

LATE

February 14, 2012

TO: Chair Josh Green, M.D. and Members of the Senate Committee on Health

FROM: Cigar Association of America, Inc.
(William Goo)

RE: **SB 2422** - Relating to Tobacco Products
Hearing Date: Monday, February 13, 2012 at 1:15 p.m.

My name is William Goo. I represent the Cigar Association of America, Inc. (CAA).

CAA respectfully opposes passage of **SB 2422**. While this bill would impact all users of tobacco products such as moist snuff, smokeless and pipe tobacco, it is directed at adolescents and young adults. These kinds of tobacco products are not typically favored by adolescents and young adults in Hawaii. Hence, increasing the tax on these tobacco products would not necessarily be a deterrent to their use. The imposition of a higher tax will also negatively impact retail sales of these products locally. It will inevitably lead to users seeking alternative and less expensive means to purchase their products which will consequently result in a decrease in tax revenue notwithstanding any proposed rate increase.

It is respectfully requested that the Committee hold this measure. Thank you for considering this testimony.

Green4 - Mailene

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, February 12, 2012 9:55 AM
To: HTHTestimony
Cc: CathyTsauro@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for SB2422 on 2/13/2012 1:15:00 PM

Testimony for HTH 2/13/2012 1:15:00 PM SB2422

Conference room: 229
Testifier position: Oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Catherine Tsauro
Organization: Individual
E-mail: CathyTsauro@gmail.com
Submitted on: 2/12/2012

Comments:

My name is Catherine Tsauro, and I strongly oppose an increase of tobacco taxes. The state already greatly benefits from millions of dollars the current tax rate already brings in. \$3.20 per pack of cigarettes already goes to the state. The government cannot keep taxing the same group of people, claiming it's for their own good. In this day and age, everyone already knows the dangers of smoking and do so at their own risk. This is about increasing the state's income to try and reduce the deficit. Hawaii has raised this tax 11 times in the last 14 years. Let's be innovative and look for new revenue sources, such as gambling. Thank you.