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Testimony Re: House Bill 5246: Protection Against Second-Hand Marijuana Smoke Exposure

House Health & Human Services

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Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its support for House Bill 5246. This bill would provide that any law or regulation which protects a person from exposure from second-hand smoke would also provide protection from exposure to second-hand marijuana smoke, regardless of how the smoke was generated.

As with any other type of secondhand smoke, the toxic substances and carcinogens in marijuana secondhand smoke can easily be inhaled by children who are present or frequent the areas where smoking takes place.

- According to the CDC, marijuana has many of the same chemicals as tobacco smoke, including those linked to lung cancer.ⁱ
- People who are exposed to secondhand marijuana smoke can have detectable levels of THC in their systems.
 - Recent studies have found strong associations between those who said there was someone in the home or a caretaker who used marijuana and the child having detectable levels of THC (the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana)ⁱⁱ.
- Current scientific knowledge suggests that marijuana and tobacco secondhand smoke have similar makeup and can have similar negative impacts on cardiovascular (heart and blood vessels) health, leading to partially blocked arteries, stroke, heart attack, and even death.ⁱⁱⁱ

Ensuring that Rhode Island laws and regulations safeguard individuals against the harmful effects of second-hand marijuana smoke is a critical step to protect the health and well-being of children.

Thank you for the leadership that the General Assembly has shown on this issue and thank you to Representative Diaz for sponsoring this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

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ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention “Marijuana Health Effects.” Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/health-effects.html>

ⁱⁱ Sangmo L, Braune T, Liu B, Wang L, Zhang L, Sosnoff CS, Blount BC, Wilson KM. Secondhand marijuana exposure in a convenience sample of young children in New York City. *Pediatr Res*. 2020 May 13;10.1038/s41390-020-0958-7. doi: 10.1038/s41390-020-0958-7. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 32403116; PMCID: PMC7882144.

ⁱⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention “Marijuana Health Effects.” Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/health-effects.html>