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## **North Dakota smoking debate is not about rights**

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I find the current argument by people who claim smoking “rights” in bars and hotels perplexing.

Rights are not debated when businesses must conform to building codes, equipment safety standards and food safety requirements. Air safety is as important to public health as all of the other government regulations that protect us from known health hazards.

It is difficult for me, then, to understand why one section of the business community (bars and hotels) is not required to follow the same safety standards as other businesses. It is even harder to understand the argument that a “right” of these business owners is somehow more important than protecting employees and patrons from air pollution that is a known cause of heart disease, emphysema, stroke, sudden infant deaths and cancer.

Legislators should ensure that secondhand smoke, a known health hazard, is regulated in all workplaces by supporting House Bill 1213. It’s a clear issue of the public’s health.