

RAISED BILL No. H.B. 6616 AN ACT ESTABLISHING THAT WOOD SMOKE SHALL BE CONSIDERED A PUBLIC NUISANCE UNDER THE PUBLIC HEALTH CODE.

Chairs Senator Jonathan Harris, Representative Betsy Ritter, and Members of the Public Health Committee:

My name is Laura Russo and I live in Milford CT.

Here is a brief outline of what occurred:

Saturday, June 26, 2004 - I arrived home in the evening Got hit with smoke, held my breath and ran into the house. Had an asthma attack...was able to get under control with breathing treatment and Prednisone. Coughing however continued. My step-son also has an asthma attack.

June 27th I am still having difficulty-breathing so I end up in the Emergency Room for treatment When I returned back from the hospital the air was filled with smoke again so I covered my mouth and held my breath to get inside my house.

June 28th Ken D'Ademo (my fiancé (at the time)) sends out an email to our neighbors with asthma warning them about the smoke and how I ended up in the hospital. Speak with Joanne Acker turns out her son Teddy is having asthma attacks too and has begun doing treatments.

June 29th We receive an email back from our neighbors who live two doors down telling us that they bought an outdoor fireplace.

Fires keep continuing as the months go on when it is not raining and when they are not traveling. My son and I try to stay indoors after 8 to avoid asthma attacks virtually becoming a prisoner in our own home.

Even after having closed all our doors and window the smoke still seeped into our three season porch and entered my Mother's room through the bilco doors.

**I have now contacted Milford Health Department
Milford Police Department
Milford Fire Department
Beth Kudrarauskas & a Michelle (no last name)– EPA
Gary Archambault – CT State Health Department
The DEP
The Mayor's office**

The advice I get is the same....without the word stating wood-smoke in the nuisance laws there is nothing they can do to help...there are no laws to protect us...they would like to but they can't. Try hiring an attorney.

We did. Even went to court. The result was the same. Although my lungs were damaged there still were no laws to support our case. We weren't after money...only after a right to breath.

Since then we have moved to a house located on a bigger plot of land next to open space. I have not been to the hospital for any smoke related asthma attacks, however I still have problems due to the damage I suffered from the high dose steroid use during that period.

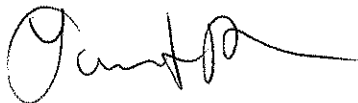
My mother was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2005...she started coughing back then they said it was bronchitis. She was a non-smoker. She passed away on January 8th of this year.

What is the cost of not passing this bill? I can tell you an outdoor fireplace goes for anywhere from 50-150 dollars. My co-pay for the ambulance ride was a lot more for each trip. My medicine, loss of work, medical bills and the look on my children's face thinking they were going to lose their 2nd mother after their first one died was more than words can describe.

I am not asking that you stop the sale of outdoor fireplaces only that you allow a bill to be passed so that will allow a person a right to breath, grant a person the right who is having their health endangered to actually be able to do something about it. I didn't have that right and spent over \$30k fighting that right and lost much more precious things in the process.

Do not let another person's life be put in jeopardy. Healthcare costs are one of the nation's biggest concerns and not protecting people here in CT would be obscene. Especially when a chemo treatment can cost \$3,000-6,000 for each visit. Wood Smoke is proven to cause cancer like tobacco smoke so if people's houses are surrounded in smoke they should have the right to have a no-smoking zone like they do now from cigarettes. Give people a choice.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura J. Russo', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Laura J. Russo