PERSUASIVE SPEECH:

NO SMOKING BAN

FOR

KIMBERLY RIFE

Hello ladies and gentlemen, and thank you for allowing me to speak with you today on a subject that I consider to be critical to the health and well being of every employee in this company. I am here to encourage you to vote for a no smoking ban that applies to all outside areas of the company property. Of course, every pro has a con and there will be those in our employ who might feel their rights have been compromised, but the bottom line is, SMOKING KILLS and second hand smoke is a known carcinogen that has the same ability to annihilate all of us as well.

I am proposing a complete ban to be carried out as humanely and equitably as possible, one that achieves the critical purpose while still allowing valued employees to maintain a sense of participation and encouragement, no matter which side of the cigarette one sees. Your staff is here because you have hired them for their talent, vision and dedication. Some of your employees may still smoke, and that is their choice, but it is also the right of every other employee to not have to be exposed to a toxic environment caused by smoking.

We know that smoking causes cancer, causes and exacerbates heart disease, and incites many other adverse physical conditions. On the page headed, “Smoking and Tobacco Use: Health Effects of Cigarette Smoking, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states, compared with non-smokers, smoking is estimated to increase the risk of:

* Coronary heart disease by 2 to 4 times
* Stroke by 2 to 4 times
* Men developing lung cancer by 23 times”

Secondhand smoke (also known as SHS) is no less deadly. There is a lot of information on secondhand smoke on the American Cancer Society’s website. On their page subtitled, “What is Secondhand Smoke?,” we learn there are two types of SHS:

* Sidestream smoke, which is the smoke that comes from the end of a lit cigarette
* Mainstream smoke, which is the smoke that is exhaled by a smoker.

We also learn that when non-smokers are in the presence of those who are smoking, they take in nicotine and other toxic chemicals, just like smokers do. We are also taught that SHS is a known human carcinogen. The article goes on to explain that SHS has been linked to cancers of the larynx, pharynx, brain, bladder, rectum, and stomach, to name some. It’s bad enough that adults are exposed to SHS, and even thought there are rarely children in our workplace or at our outside common areas, consider this: The American Cancer Society, in the same article, states that childhood exposure to secondhand smoke also causes, “Between 150,000 and 300,000 lower respiratory tract infections in children under 18 months of age, and lung infections resulting in 7,500 to 15,000 hospitalizations each year.”

I believe that all of the research that has been done on smoking in the workplace and the effects of secondhand smoke are their own arguments to encourage the extension and enforcement of smoking bans to include the outdoor spaces of this organization’s property. The American Cancer Society also teaches us that:

* A smoke-free environment helps create a safer, healthier workplace.
* Smokers who want to quit may have more of a reason to do so.
* Direct health care costs to the company may be reduced.
* Employees may be less likely to miss work due to smoking-related illnesses.

There are many organizations and institutions that have made admirable attempts at instituting and enforcing no smoking bans for the outdoor areas of the business property. The state of Maine has comprehensive, multi level policies available for review and implementation on their website. One of the points made in their literature is that there are different degrees of compliance available. They offer their suggestions for adhering to a smoke free environment in levels of “good,” “better,” and “best.” Because the “best” encompasses all levels, I’d like to share the bullet points that shape this policy:

“The use of tobacco products is banned in:

• All enclosed areas where work is performed, as well as in all rest rooms, all meeting rooms, all lunchrooms and all private offices.

• All outdoor locations, including outdoor eating areas, parking lots and within vehicles including personal vehicles when-ever such vehicles are parked on company property.

• All employer-owned and all employer-leased vehicles used by employees at all times.

• All employee-owned vehicles used in the course of work whenever other employees or another person is in the vehicle for work-related reasons at all times.”

I am sure you respect and value all of your employees, or else they wouldn’t be in your company. They are loyal, have good ideas, and for the most part, spend at least one third of their lives in the professional environment in one way or another. Although most would probably applaud a far-reaching outdoor smoking ban, we cannot assume that, but this is a critical component to the endurance and health, not only of your company, but of it’s natural human resources. I encourage you to consider your employees as partners with regard to instituting this policy. Give them pride of ownership and include them in decisions such as when to transition into the plan, how long the transition period will last, allow them to vote on whether you will follow a “good, better, or best” policy-remember, even the more lenient good plan is better than none. Consider their feelings and encourage them with facts. Let them know how important their health is to YOU as well as to their families and communities. Give them incentives; let them have a voice. Provide a forum for feedback and let your employees know their opinions count. Let them know that more than their health will be positively impacted; healthier environments breed healthier people who require less medical attention. Healthier offices inspire healthier environments at home as well.

Thank you for allowing me to encourage all of you to vote for this no smoking ban. Generations ago, the public was sold the myth that smoking was “cool,” or “elegant.” The golden era of Hollywood wanted females to want to be Bette Davis as she took one of those cigarettes from Claude Rains. Those days are long gone!! In this day and age we are more educated and informed and there is no longer any excuse to encourage or even tolerate the acceptance of smoking in any area of the workplace.

Thank you all!