

## PEA Committee

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**From:** Heather Kartchner <heatherkartchner@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 04, 2018 11:47 AM  
**To:** PEA Committee  
**Subject:** Support for PEA-41

Date: January 3, 2017

To: Maui County Council

From: Heather Kartchner, concerned citizen

Re: Strong Support for Maui County Smoke Free Cars Bill

Hrg: January 4, 2017

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in support of Bill number PEA-41, which will prohibit the use of cigarettes in vehicles with minors present.

I strongly support this bill!

Growing up, my father made the dangers of smoking clear to us. He grew up in a home with heavy cigarette use. At that time, it wasn't considered to be very harmful. As he got older, he developed asthma and it just got worse through the years. While his parents continued to smoke around him and his siblings the asthma got so bad that he actually had to attend school 40 minutes away from his home, in the mountains with fresh air and more oxygen. As people became more aware of the harmfulness of cigarettes, his parents realized that they could be a huge contributing factor to his asthmatic issues. As a result of their enlightenment, they stopped smoking around him. They discontinued the use of cigarettes in the car and in the home. They didn't notice a large change at first, but as time went on my father had less frequent asthma attacks and less struggles related to asthma. A couple of years later, he was doing significantly better and was able to join his siblings at the same school in their home town.

I know my father wasn't alone in this struggle of having asthma related to environmental factors that can be prevented. The CDC has found that in Michigan, where the smoking in a car ban was implemented, they saw an 8% overall decrease for asthmatic related hospitalizations. While 8% might not sound like a large number, 48.6 million does. That's the amount of money that was saved from being spent in asthma related health care costs. The proof is out there. With so many keiki in Hawai'i already struggling with asthma, why wouldn't we want to make it better for them?

The Hawai'i state Department of Health estimates that over 108,000 people in Hawai'i have asthma and over a third of those people are children. Approximately 36,000 children in Hawai'i are affected. By implementing the Maui County Smoke Free Cars bill, not only will we be helping these affected keiki struggle less and save the state money that can be used on better things, but we will also be providing them a better education with less days at school missed due to asthma related hospitalizations. A better education is something we can all agree on!

I hope you will pass this bill and do what is right for the children of Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Heather Kartchner, 31

Proud and loving mother