

Yes vote on 12 will make workplaces smoke free

The Sept. 7 Journal editorial on teen smoking was a reminder of the progress we've made in South Dakota in reducing tobacco use as a result of public education and prevention programs in the schools and communities, better enforcement, assistance with quitting smoking, targeted media messages and fewer environments where smoking is permitted.

The South Dakota Tobacco-Free Kids Network has been instrumental in those efforts throughout the last decade, including securing funding for programs such as the successful SD Quitline and leading efforts to pass the 2002 law banning smoking in all public places and some work sites.

One correction: I was not the Secretary of Health in the late 1990s. I served in that capacity from 1985-1989. During that time, I advocated for legislation and policies to make all workplaces and public places smoke-free, including working with Gov. Mickelson to implement an executive order in 1988 making all state buildings smoke free.

During the last 35-40 years, many citizens and elected representatives have advocated for policies and legislation that would provide a smoke-free environment for everyone, regardless of where they work. A "yes" vote on Referred Law 12 in November will finally make that a reality. It's time.

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