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Honorable Council:

I am here today because I strongly oppose a ban on smoking in Cambridge public parks and in seating areas adjacent to restaurants. I am fed up with lies and misconceptions about secondhand smoke. Public smoking bans are based on the premise that secondhand smoke is harmful to non-smokers' health. Here I quote the Canadian Medical Association Journal- "The problem with the data on passive smoking is that the estimated risks are so close to zero."

Here is a fact: a nonsmoker would have to work with a smoker 8 hours a day, 5 days a week, 50 weeks a year, for well over a hundred years to be exposed to a quantity of arsenic equal to one grain of salt.

I could go on and on with facts about the miniscule amounts of supposedly toxic substances (many of which are actually present in our food and in our environment, and which we ingest every day from other sources) that are supposedly present in environmental tobacco smoke, but my time here today is short. ~~I highly encourage those who are of skeptical bent and interested in truth, to look into this issue further, as there is a plethora of resources available for further reading.~~

I encourage the Council to

To sum up I will say that if the data on indoor exposure to secondhand smoke is flawed and highly exaggerated, then the supposed risk from outdoor exposure is laughable.

host a scientific debate

There is a need for balance and fairness for all citizens in our society- if some citizens are annoyed by tobacco smoke, even outdoors, and desire to ban smoking in public parks and in the **few** restaurant and bar patios that still allow it (and I stress **few**), then I maintain that this because their opinions and even physiological reactions have been influenced by the creeping tide of anti-smoking legislation that has been passed, often without public input, for the past 30 years. This tide of legislation has been passed on the basis of scientific untruths and exaggerations, and is now moving into a new phase where it does not even need scientific grounding. As policy makers you have the power to influence social norms with your regulations. I would encourage you to think long and hard about what message you are sending with the legislation that you pass, legislation that is not grounded in fact, but in social engineering.