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I'm in support of the smoking ban.

Does this surprise you? It shouldn't. I've hated the practice of smoking since I was six years old and saw those PSAs about the damage smoking does to lungs, even though I used to smoke years ago. I hate cigarettes. I hate the way they smell, I hate the way tobacco companies use smokers as a regular supply of money, and I hate the fact that I could walk into a cloud of smoke right now and not even care. I hate it.

For those of you who don't know, the smoking ban would prevent smoking in public areas, sequestering it to clearly labeled smoking areas that would be pushed away from the general student population.

It would also give students like me - students who need to avoid cigarette smoke for medical reasons - the ability to avoid the cigarette smoke.

I'm asthmatic. I also recently discovered I was pregnant (though that's a story for another time), and am more sensitive to cigarette smoke than I have been in a while. I need to avoid secondhand smoke for my sake, for my baby's sake, and for the sake of everyone around me, because if I don't, I could end up having a miscarriage, or having a baby with two heads, or having a baby born with its heart on the outside of its chest cavity, or having a baby who is unnaturally susceptible to lung tumors.

But I can't avoid secondhand smoke. It's literally everywhere.

I'm not exaggerating. Smoke diffuses through the campus at an alarming rate. It's not uncommon to walk through a cloud of smoke that lingers even though the actual smoker has been gone for fifteen minutes or more. You can't see where the secondhand smoke is in many cases, which makes it very difficult to sidestep or avoid it in the first place.

Oh, and even a little bit of exposure to secondhand smoke can impact a fetus's brain development. Even a little bit of exposure to secondhand smoke can increase a non-smokers likelihood of getting lung cancer. Even a moderate exposure to secondhand smoke can make learning disabilities more likely in young children. I'm approaching this from my perspective because my perspective is the only one I have, but pregnancy shouldn't be the only

consideration here.

And again, it's everywhere, even though most people don't actually smoke. So... I guess I should just carry a smoke detector around wherever I go, right?

If it weren't for secondhand smoke (which is actually more dangerous than actually picking up a cigarette and smoking it), then I'd have no problem with smoking. I think it's a little unhealthy, yeah, but you know, it's your body, you can do what you want with it, I'm not going to judge. I don't judge people who do far worse things with their body so long as they're not doing it in my living room. And honestly, I get it better than you know: Nicotine is one of the most addicting substances on the face of the planet, according to most studies, and it's also the hardest one to let go of when it comes down to it. I remember the shakes, and they weren't pleasant.

But I also didn't want to make anyone else sick with my smoking, which is why I quit.

Some say that this rule, which would mostly impact the faculty, would unfairly focus on the students' health rather than the needs of those who work at the school. That's a fair criticism. I don't think the ban would necessarily ignore the needs of the faculty - I think it would be a positive change for both the faculty and the students - but it's a fair criticism, and one that I would be fully receptive to on another day.

But right now, unfortunately, I'm livid because I walked into unseen clouds of secondhand smoke no less than nine times Monday, less than four hours after I was released from the hospital for a flu bug. By the end of the day, I was a trembling, incoherent mess begging my boyfriend to take me back home. If this is what I'm going to have to put up with throughout my pregnancy, you can be damn sure I'm going to say something about it.