

Greetings to you all,

In service as Chair and on behalf of the State Trauma Advisory Committee's (STAC) Injury Prevention Subcommittee, I am writing this letter to formally voice opposition to some recently filed legislation, Senate Bill 566 (SB566) and House Bill (HB615), short titled, the NC Consumer Fireworks Safety Act. It is the wish of the injury prevention professionals from each of the 14 Trauma Centers represented in this committee that this legislation as proposed not be permitted to reach approval/become law in our state.

It is of great concern to our committee that passing such legislation will result in an increase of fireworks related injuries, deaths, and hospital costs across North Carolina. Our perspective is based on studies that show increased fireworks-related injuries in states that have loosened their restriction on fireworks laws. Since 2008, six additional states have legalized discharge of consumer grade fireworks and during that time serious injuries in those states increased by 75%.

In 2018, 191 North Carolina residents visited an emergency department due to a firework related injury, and during 2017 and 2018 the North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center admitted 33 patients due to fireworks related injuries.. Eight of these patients were under the age of 16. The average hospital cost of burn patients at the NC Jaycee Burn Center during that time period was over \$62,000 per patient, which means hospital costs for these 33 patients was an estimated \$2 million total. The cost and frequency of fireworks related injuries in North Carolina is already too high, and if this bill were to be approved we can expect to see a significant increase in both. Although the proposed bill includes tax revenue language based on the sales of these "consumer fireworks", those proposed monies simply do not equate to the real cost of hospital bills and the emotional cost for those who have lost someone or been injured in a fireworks related injury.

Please join the State Trauma Advisory Committee for Injury Prevention in opposition to SB 566 and HB 615. Reach out to your local legislators and voice your concerns.

Sincerely,

Tricia Smar

STAC Injury Prevention Subcommittee Chair