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Apr 7th, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

### An Economic Assessment of Smokefree Restaurant Establishments in Tennessee: Implications for Other Smoking Establishments

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Minnick, Christen MPH; Mamudu, H. M. PhD; Bhattacharjee, Prasun PhD; Nolt, Kate L. MPH, PhD; Niragu, Valentine C. MPH; Greer, Kelli; Smith, Jon L. PhD; and Studlar, Donley T. PhD, "An Economic Assessment of Smokefree Restaurant Establishments in Tennessee: Implications for Other Smoking Establishments" (2022). *Appalachian Student Research Forum & Jay S. Boland Undergraduate Research Symposium*. 140. <https://dc.etsu.edu/asrf/2022/schedule/140>

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# An Economic Assessment of Smokefree Policies in Tennessee

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## Background

- In 2007, Tennessee enacted and implemented the Nonsmoker Protection Act (NSPA) to protect nonsmokers.
- The NSPA created 100% smoke-free restaurants; however, it exempted several venues, including age-restricted ones such as bars, and preempted tobacco regulation;
- The NSPA also continued with the explicit state preemption of tobacco regulation.
- Thus, vast segments of nonsmokers such as employees and patrons of bars unprotected from secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure and local entities cannot pursue 100% Smokefree Policies (SFPs).
- In the absence of Tennessee [TN]-specific studies, economic arguments and concerns have been used to counter efforts to create 100% SFPs in TN, serving as impetus for this study.

## Objectives

- Assess the economic effects of 100% SFPs in TN, with focus on restaurants
- Examine the implications smokefree restaurants for exempted venues
- Provide policy recommendations

## Methods

**Study Design:** Parallel mixed methods that triangulated quantitative and qualitative findings.

**Domains of study:** number of business establishments, employment levels, and payroll

**Quantitative data:** The data were gleaned from NAICS, Census Bureau, and Tennessee Department of Revenue

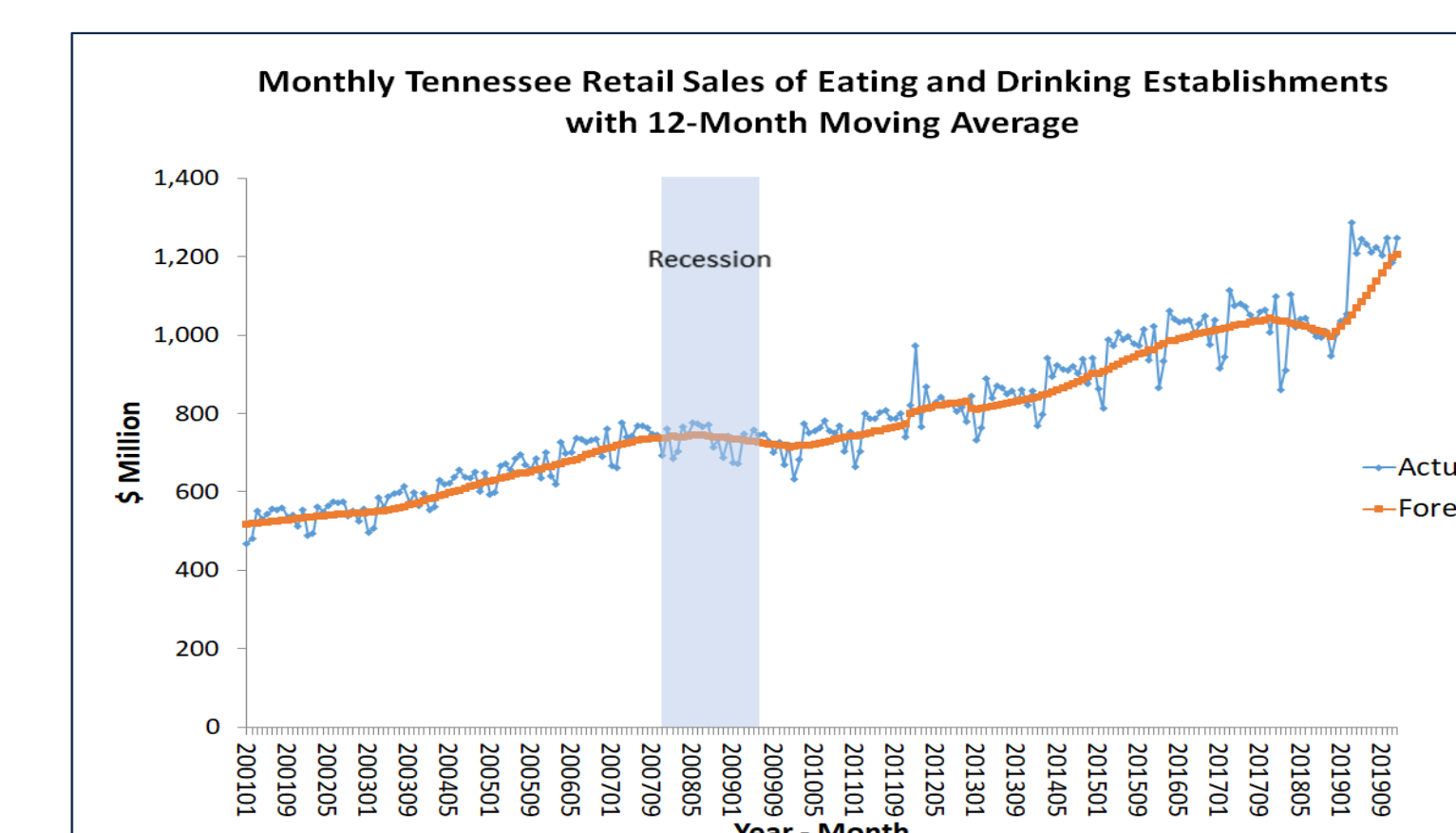
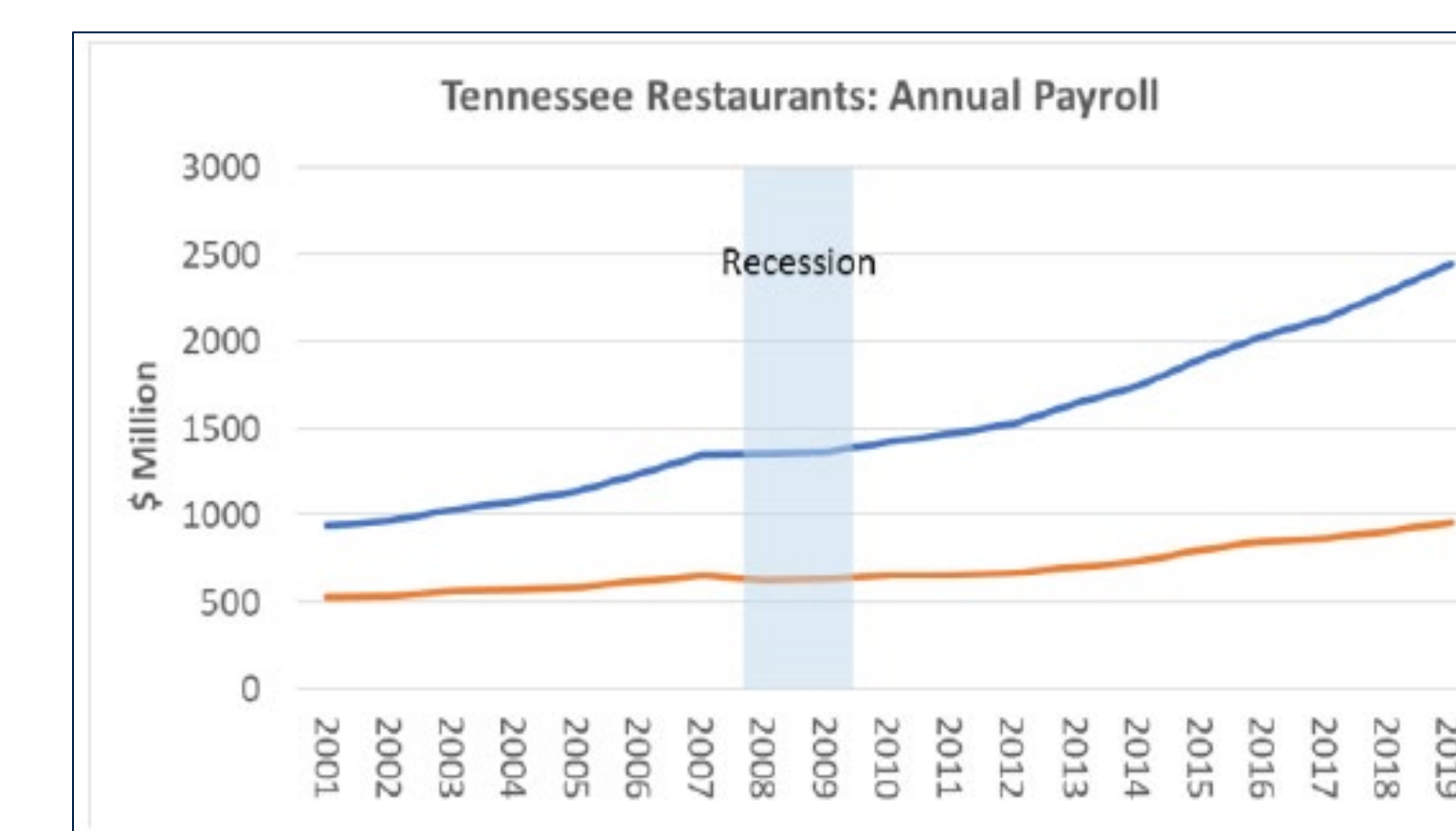
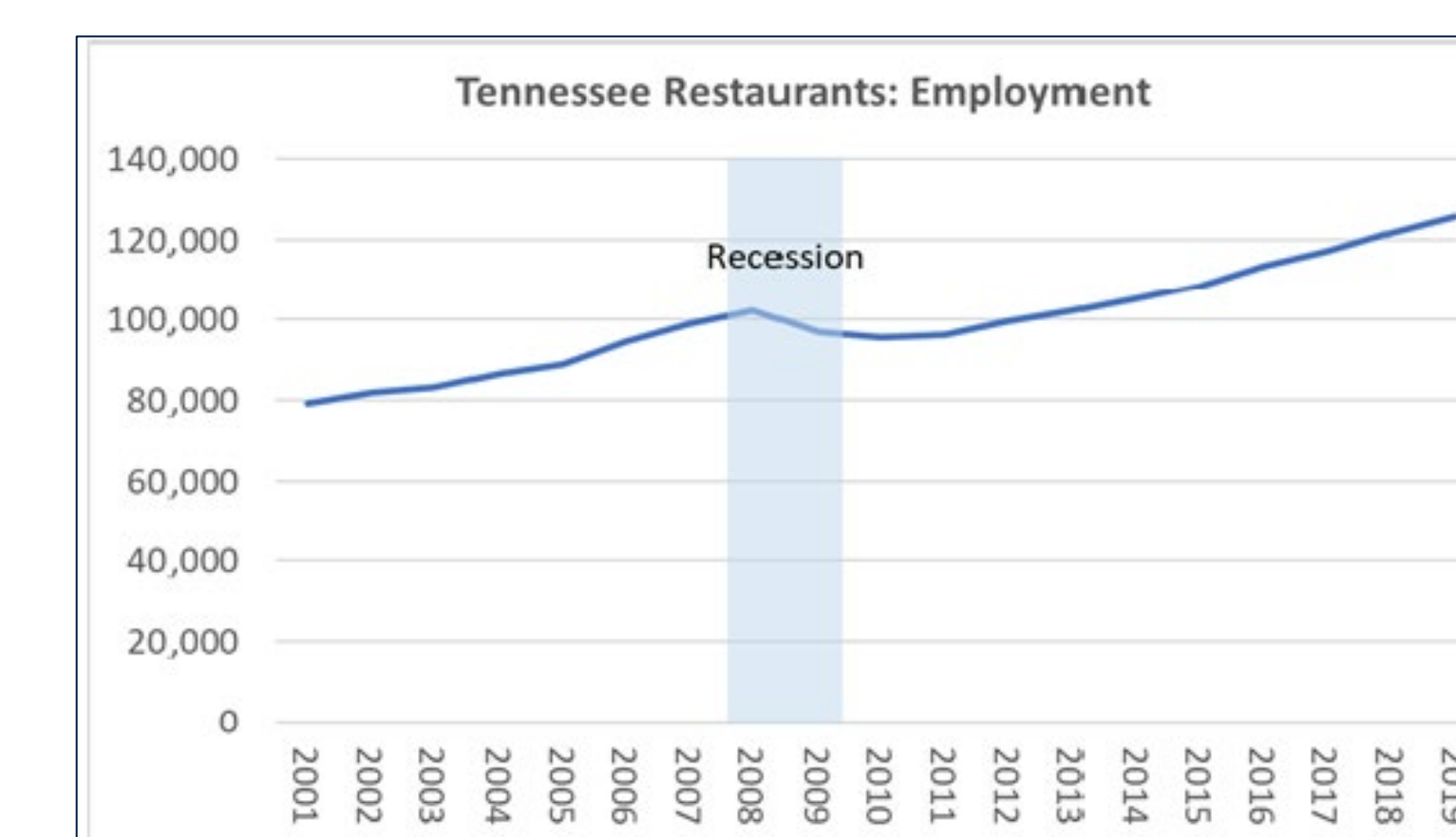
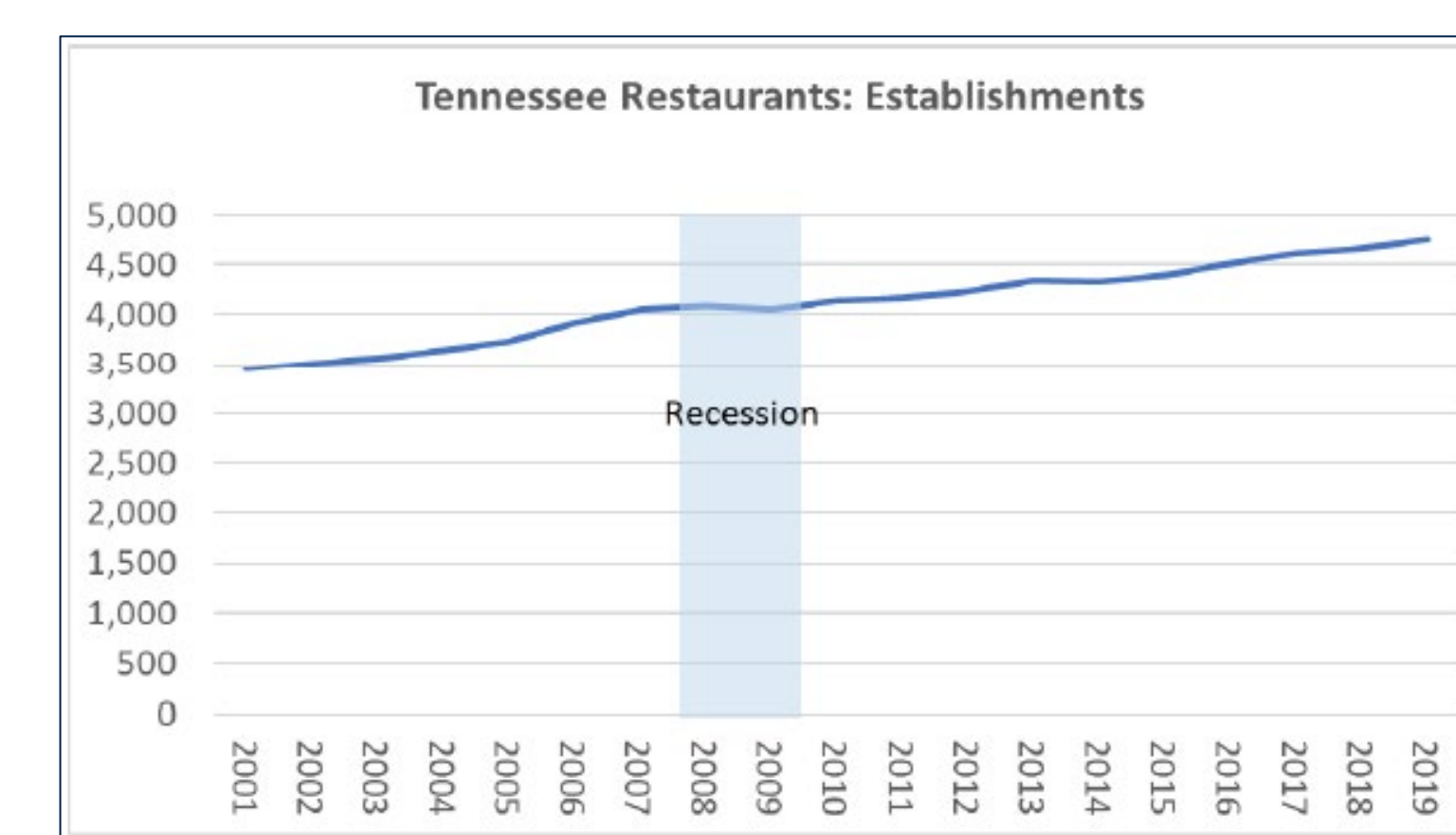
**Qualitative data:** Involved interviews of establishments in TN that voluntarily transitioned to smoke-free environment.

- Total of 7 such establishments
- Capacities ranging from 50 to over 69,000 people
- Number of employees ranging from 6 to over 1300 were interviewed

**Analysis:** We compare the data for 2001-2007, i.e., before the enactment and implementation of the NSPA with 2010-2019, i.e., after the NSPA post-recessionary period.

## Results

It was discovered that smoke-free environments have positive economic effects on restaurant establishments in Tennessee. By focusing on the SFP effect on restaurant establishments, the findings can be extrapolated to support the case for 100% smoke-free environments for other hospitality locations such as bars, music venues, and casinos.



After analysis of trends for retail sales, number of establishments, employment, and payrolls by size of establishment and Metropolitan Statistical Area, a positive economic effect was identified for majority of these indicators between 2010 and 2019, i.e., a 10-year period following restaurants becoming smoke-free.

The qualitative data from the interviews reinforces these findings. Owners and operators from 7 such establishments were contacted for interviews in 2021. Their venues had occupancy capacities ranging from 50 to over 69,000 people and had number of employees ranging from 6 to over 1300. When asked about reasons for voluntarily engaging in SFPs, major themes emerged:

- Increase and attract new/prospective customers to increase revenues
- Health concerns for staff and customers
- Response to customer and employee complaints (online and in-person)
- SHS exposure and equity

## Results, Continued

Additionally, results from this small pilot study show that although responses on the economic effects were mixed, respondents were overwhelmingly in support of removing exemption clauses from SFPs in Tennessee (6 out of 7) and permitting local jurisdiction to pursue 100% SFPs (6 out of 7). This entails removing preemption of tobacco regulation in the state from the NSPA to facilitate local tobacco control. Interviews are ongoing.

Thus, it can be inferred from these Tennessee-specific data with high degree of confidence that other hospitality venues will benefit economically in some way by becoming smoke-free.

## Discussion & Conclusions

Tobacco use in Tennessee is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the state, accounting for over 11,400 deaths and \$5 billion in total economically-attributable costs (\$2.67 billion in direct healthcare) annually. The NSPA was enacted and implemented in 2007 to address this toll of tobacco use in the state through the protection of nonsmokers from SHS exposure. Nonetheless, the NSPA has exemptions, and the preemption of tobacco regulations has thwarted the growth of local 100% SFPs. Evidence indicates that comprehensive or 100% SFPs is the only way to ensure equal and equitable protection of all nonsmokers. This economic assessment of the effects of the creation of smokefree restaurants by the NSPA using number of establishments, employment, payroll, and retail sales revenue show positive effects of adoption of smokefree environment across all these economic domains. The evidence of positive effects of SFP was further discerned in interviews with private establishments that voluntarily adopted 100% SFP. A series of recommendations are offered as evidence-based strategies for comprehensive SFP in Tennessee. These include:

1. Removal of all exemptions from state SFP
2. Repeal or Removal of preemption to tobacco regulation
3. Enforcement of smokefree environment regulation