

Opposition Testimony HB 2206

Dear Chairman Kleebs and fellow committee members,

I am writing to you today to ask for your careful consideration and perhaps a re-examination of the information provided to you in regards to expanding alcohol availability and sales in the state of Kansas.

I have personally read both sides of this argument and I have discussed this at length with numerous of my fellow voters. Overwhelmingly, this is opposed by those around me. Whether they drink alcohol or not, there is a lot of concern about how we can choose this path and still protect the children in our communities in particular. I have children that work in retail stores. They convey stories on a regular basis on how big screen televisions along with other unbelievable items are shoplifted from these stores. How can we truly prevent alcohol from being shoplifted by minors in these retail stores? These stores are quick to lower their costs of operations by under staffing the store during non-peak hours and usually do not have asset protection providers on site. In addition, employees are not allowed to attempt to stop someone from shoplifting or even from following them into the parking lot for a tag number. Choosing to do so may result in the loss of your employment. The store merely relies on cameras to build evidence on the chance that the police are successful at catching them at some point.

We all recognize that alcohol is a controlled substance because of the inherent dangers that come along with the consumption of this product. We all know friends and loved ones that have been harmed in some way by the misuse of alcohol in their lives. Just this year, a young man in my home town lost both of his legs due to underage drinking. An up and coming track star, this young man's story has broken the hearts of the entire town. As adults, we realize just how simply this horrible accident could have been avoided. It is obvious when reading the information provided by both sides that liquor stores can and do provide better safe guards to control this potentially dangerous substance. The proponents of this bill have failed to adequately address these legitimate concerns. While they may argue that it will be more convenient and that this bill will increase their profit margin, they have failed to demonstrate how they will protect Kansas children in a reasonable and practical way. They have no intention of meeting the same rigorous standards that the liquor stores are required to meet under our current law.

The phrase "first, do no harm" comes to my mind as I write this. While we commonly use this in regards to providing medical care I believe it is appropriate in this decision you have before you today. The opportunity for irreparable harm far outweighs the convenience that this bill seeks to provide. I genuinely appreciate all the sacrifices that you make in service for our state. I pray for strength and wisdom for all of you each day. I ask that you vote no on HB 2206.

Sincerely,

Leah Howell
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