

Twisted H Liquor
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March 11, 2016

House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee

Dear Chairman Hutton and Committee Members,

My name is Stacey Harlow and I own Twisted H Liquor in Hugoton. I am also the immediate past president of the Kansas Association of Beverage Retailers (KABR). I have been in the liquor business since 2006. My first store was a partnership in Satanta. Seeing a better opportunity I sold my half and purchased my own adventure in 2011. I employ two full time and 5 part time employees. I try to do as much business with my local, small businesses just like me. My loan for my business and also insurance are provided from locally owned companies. I support local charities and the school sports teams, also youth in 4-H and after prom parties. I am proud to say over the years that I and my employees have passed every controlled buy that the state has sent in to my store. I offer a \$100 bonus to the clerk that refuses the sale to an underaged customer.

House Bill 2718 is not good for Kansas. Many local, small businesses will be hurt. My store is in a community of about 5000 people. Beer sales make up 70 to 75% of my monthly sales. If this bill was to pass and go into effect, I would be greatly hurt or possibly even put out of business as there would be at least three other outlets selling strong beer in our small community. And since they have other products to make up their bottom line they would be able to sell it cheaper than I could.

I made a sizable investment in 2011 purchasing this business. It cost \$300,000 for the building alone and \$750,000 for the business. I make this investment understanding that, in exchange for my license, I have an agreement with the state to uphold the rules and values of our statutes.

To change the rules in the middle of the game does not sound fair to me – especially when it is based on a strange “trigger” controlled by an out of state beer manufacturer. The bill has the same problems as previous strong beer proposals.

I take pride in knowing that my employees do very well at keeping minors from getting alcohol from my store. Currently, CMB retailers are not being controlled by the state and left up to the local departments they have minimal regulations and oversight. For example, I cannot sell anything before 9 AM or after 11 PM but walk into a CMB before this time and buy all you want. Or on a holiday when we have to be closed, there they are selling away. If I get caught selling to minors my store could be shut down for a period of time, but what if they get caught? They might have their beer section closed but not the whole store? I hire only employees over the age of 21, but this law allows them to have 18-year-old employees selling as long as there is someone 21 or older on the premises. Or how about that 16-year-old stocking? Alcoholics can choose not to go into a liquor store; can they choose not to buy gas or groceries?

I ask you to please stand strong and uphold the morals of our great state! Leave the strong beer where it is, in a very controlled environment!

Thank you for your time and if you have any questions feel free to call,

Stacey Harlow