
TAYLOR OIL, INC.

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Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony to you and your committee concerning Senate Bill 298.

My name is Curt Wright. I am the Vice President of Operations for Taylor Oil, Inc. based in Wellsville, Kan. We operate convenience stores in Lyndon, Ottawa, Emporia, and Spring Hill. Our business was started by my father-in-law in 1970 as a petroleum product distributor primarily delivering to the farm community and a few full service gas stations in eastern Kansas. During the last 40 years our business has evolved as competition and new marketing strategies have developed. We have adjusted our business model as we have seen the advent of self-service gasoline, convenience stores, and the latest trend of large retailers selling gas. Each of these changes has made us a better business.

In regards to the specific issue of adult beverages we have also worked through the changes in drinking age in the 80's and more currently the Kansas Supreme Court and Wyandotte County home rule ruling about 10 years ago. The "home rule" ruling caused great damage to one of my stores. At the time of the ruling Franklin County was a dry county and my store in Ottawa sold between 350 to 400 cases of beer per week, and 2 of our beer distributors told us we were the largest cereal malt beverage outlet in their territory. Within months of the Kansas Supreme Court ruling the town of Princeton voted to allow liquor stores and one was opened 6 miles south of my store. A year later I was only selling 100 to 125 cases per week. The City of Ottawa voted to allow liquor stores a year or so later and that continued to erode my beer sales.

Why does this matter? The Kansas Supreme Court made it possible for communities to decide for themselves and they have spoken loud and clear that I was not supplying the product they wanted. This legislation was born from a concept first presented over 25 years ago: legal age adults should be able to buy alcoholic beverages from where they choose. From the original premise there have been so many changes to this legislation it is difficult to recognize at times. Most, if not all of these changes have been made to satisfy legislative wishes or to appease the opposition, and all of these changes have put additional restrictions on where legal age consumers can purchase a legal product.

The latest of these changes is county option and I am here today asking you to let the voters decide if I should be allowed the opportunity to earn back the business that left me.

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 298.

Sincerely,



Curt Wright
Vice President - Operations