

March 29, 2015

Dear Mr. Chairperson and members of the committee:

Thank you for taking the time to consider SB298. My name is Megan Halstead. I have lived and worked in Topeka, Kansas for fifteen years. I am married and the proud mother of three young children. I am a strong proponent of SB 298. My three children bring me to the first reason I support this piece of legislation.

For those who have raised or are raising children, you can, most certainly, identify with the hectic nature of life. In and out of cars and car seats, stores and schools. While it is my pleasure and honor to be caretaker to my kids, I also appreciate convenience. One of the reasons I support SB298 is a very practical one. Allowing grocery and convenience stores to sell beer, wine and spirits means one less stop at a store, one less time mom has to unload a car full of young children and escort them into a liquor store, most usually unequipped with shopping carts. And, one less time mom has to load everyone back into the vehicle and their car seats. I have found myself, after a long afternoon of running errands and keeping everyone on their best behavior in the grocery store, now faced with having to take my three children into a liquor store, usually with one in my arms, leaving one arm for shopping, while praying the other two do not accidentally knock over a display of expensive wine. What a practical convenience it would be for parents of young children to be able to purchase all their groceries and a bottle of wine to accompany dinner in one spot. Imagine that – one stop shopping in the year 2015! I for one, would welcome that long-awaited advancement.

While my first reason for supporting SB298 is practical, my second reason is quite principled. As a state, we have agreed that beer, wine and spirits are legal products in the state of Kansas and can be sold to people who are of legal age. If this is true, then why is the government deciding who may and may not sell this legal product? For what reason are we picking winners and losers if we do, indeed, live in a free market society? It should be the consumer, not the government, who decides where to purchase legal items. Special protections should never be given to a certain business group, regardless of the reasons. The free market works and, as freedom-loving people, we must allow it to do its job.

The third reason I support SB298 is an economic one. With greater freedom comes increased competition and a healthier economy. Our friends who live in border cities cannot compete with stores whose states enjoy true freedom to sell legal products. Our government has put them at a serious economic disadvantage. In addition, this does not send a pro-business message to companies looking to move to our state. Committee Members, the young man who sacks your groceries, the knowledgeable butcher who helps you choose the choicest cuts of Kansas beef, the young lady who stocks the shelves, these are not the faces of "Big Box Greed". These are your neighbors, friends and members of your church, who are working hard for their families and futures. Give them a chance to compete. Show them that we value an even playing field in our state. Let them see that Kansans do not play favorites.

I, especially, challenge those of you who ran for office touting support for the free market, to vote for this legislation. This is a perfect moment to show your constituents that you believe in the principles of free enterprise for all people. And, that voting for freedom is always the right choice. If this is, indeed, the Free State, let's prove it.

I appreciate the opportunity to be a part of this important process.

Respectfully,

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