

March 28, 2012

Steven A. Berger

Opposition to SB 379

I am writing as a Kansas retailer of liquor, beer and wine who would like to see the percentage of Kansas grapes remain 60% and not be reduced, therefore I oppose SB 379. Kansas has been growing grapes for decades with great success and I invite you to visit one of our many local vineyards and wineries. I am also an adjunct professor in the Culinary Arts program at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park teaching bar and beverage management. Over the past 13 years have taken two classes a semester to visit Holyfield Vineyard and Winery to tour the facilities and I can tell you that they do grow grapes in Kansas.

Holyfield, I believe is the oldest vineyard and winery in Kansas and has been growing grapes since 1986. Something that carries the name of Kansas needs to be not only produced in Kansas, but if it is a wine, it definitely needs to be made from a majority of grapes or produce grown in our state. To me that seems only logical not only to me, but also to my customers.

Just now I asked one of my employees to tell me what he thought of wines made in Kansas. Without any idea of what I was typing up, his response was "it should be made in Kansas with grapes or fruit grown in Kansas." If the amount of required grapes or fruit is reduced, where will the majority of the juice come from? It will be made up of juice that wasn't grown in Kansas. If the juice that wasn't in demand in the state in which it was grown is then used to make up the majority of a bottle; it isn't something that should carry the name of Kansas. Doesn't this make you wonder why it wasn't in good enough to be used in its home state. Kansas wines are quality wines because when the grower grows for quality and that quality shows in the bottle. Bottles of Kansas wines should not read "Grown and Vinted in *State XYZ* and bottled in Kansas."

Selling wines and educating the public about Kansas wines can be a challenge, but a customer expects that something labeled Kansas should have some of Kansas in it, not just that it was bottled here. Please keep the "Farm" in Kansas Farm Wineries.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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House Federal & State Affairs

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