

Opponent: HB 2206

Dear Chairman Kleeb and fellow committee members,

I am very concerned about the blow this bill would have on our great state of Kansas. First, it would have a grave economic impact. Based on studies, we can expect a 45% reduction in revenue for the 750 current package stores. Many of these will not be able to stay in business because of the great loss in income. These business owners got their licenses with the understanding that their business would be regulated and operate under state laws. If this bill passes, that business will no longer be a good investment. It is the job of the legislature to look out for its citizens. Current store owners are Kansas citizens so please protect them rather than allowing out of state big box owners to put Kansans out of business.

Not only will it put our citizens out of business, but it will also increase expenditures for the state. Additional enforcement agents, customer service representatives, attorneys, legal assistants, office equipment and extra expenditures are estimated to cost 1.9 million in 2014. "This bill will reduce sales tax income and licensing income to cities and counties, require a budget increase for the Division of ABC, increase costs of liquor distribution, and reduce enforcement of underage access laws."

Second, this would be a mistake socially. Article 15 section 10 of the Kansas constitution states that alcohol should be regulated and in a recent study conducted by Public Opinion Strategies, the majority of Kansans agree. 78% believe laws should stay the same. No other state in the US operates with such a deregulated system as is being proposed. The most recent changes involve states going from control states to private retail and that is what we already have! Our system "has found a balance between the desires of those who would expand access and availability versus those who would prefer a model closer to a return to prohibition." If you compare the data from countries that have no regulation on alcohol you will see that the homicide, traffic, and drinking related deaths are much higher than statistics here in the US.

As it currently stands, "liquor stores have proven compliance rates in preventing underage sales- typically ranging from 80-88%. There are no statewide compliance rates for grocery and convenience stores." In 2005 Kansas convenience stores had a tobacco sales compliance rate of 62%. Minors are going to be able to get their hands on stronger alcohol as a result of this bill.

These are just a few of my concerns. Please send a message that you support the current system "which is 100% operated by Kansans and keeps dollars at home."

Please vote no to oppose this bill.

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