

2/4/15

Representative Mark Hutton, Chairman
House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee

Re: HB 2200 - Liquor in Grocery/Convenience Stores

Dear Chairman Hutton and Members of the Committee:

My name is Bret Birdsong and I live in Salina KS and am the owner of Brooks Retail Liquor Store, also located in Salina KS. My store is located at 1845 South 9th in Salina KS. I am submitting this testimony in opposition to HB 2200 in which Grocery and Convenience stores would be allowed to sell alcohol products.

My uncle, Carry Brooks started this store back in 1972 and was owner for over 33 years. He became terminally ill in 2005, which is when I took over running the store. Carry took great pride in running his store within all regulations being followed as they were written, especially not selling to minors. I myself also try to continue that same effort. If this bill is passed then all of that could be changed. There will be many more outlets for a minor to access alcohol in which they will not be as closely monitored as they are in a liquor store. I do not think that having someone 21 years of age or older "on the premises" will deter an 18 year old from selling to and underage friend or colleague.

I am a larger retailer and always have trouble finding room to introduce new products to the store. If this bill passes and I have to sell cigarettes, chips, and pop I am not sure it will be possible. There is very little room available for these products. And without those products I may not be able to compete with the grocery and convenience stores.

Here at Brooks Liquor, as well as many other current liquor stores, we work hard at being great with our customer service. I employ 15 people here at the store. Of those 15, over half are full time employees. We do our best to help our customers in any way we can. We are knowledgeable on the products we carry and are always courteous when they come into the store. If the bill passes it will be more difficult to employ as many people as I do now, and that in turn could hurt that great customer service that we try so hard to achieve. More work would be required of the employees and therefore less time would be spent with the customer.

Because of the success of my store I am also able to contribute over \$75,000 a year to many local charities and organizations that help everyone young and old alike. With the passing of this bill, those funds would not be available for me to continue to help those important organizations and charities that are good for the local community.

These along with many other reasons, is why I respectfully ask you to oppose HB2200. There are too many negative repercussions from the passing of this bill, whether it is to myself or to other retailers, or to the communities the retailers reside in.

Thank You

Bret Birdsong

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