

Federal and State Affairs Committee

Senator Braumgardt and members of the committee.

I want to thank you for allowing me time to express my thoughts for my opposition to SB54.

My name is Edward Davies. I have had a thirty three year career in law enforcement. I worked up through the ranks to Captain with the Johnson County Sheriff Office and subsequently served nine years as Marion County Sheriff. I also served on former Governor Mike Haden Mental Health Reform Task force.

My opposition to SB54 is from the perspective of law enforcement in a rural community that being Marion County. This bill would increase the profit margins for corporations and other retail business but result in the loss of small liquor retailers and people's jobs. Idleness from losing jobs increases alcohol consumption and this reflects in more domestic abuse which law enforcement has to handle. The bottom line is important in a capitalistic society to say the least. However, there are negative ramifications for society that goes along with the increase of liquor sales. How does society weigh the pros and cons on this issue? Your committee has an important decision to make and I hope that relating a law enforcement view of this matter will be of some value to the committee. I must limit my comments however as they pertain to Marion County.

Federal, State and local organizations have completed many surveys on alcohol consumption by underage persons. Kansas Communities That Care (KCTC) for example has data developed over the last ten years. This organization works with 222 school districts in Kansas. KCTC objective is to identify factors that increase the use of alcohol by underage people. They are able to help schools and the communities to develop plans for curtailing this problem. They have been an important factor helping law enforcement in Marion County. Marion County is ranked second to last in binge drinking by underage persons in Kansas.

KCTC and other sources show the corollary between the increase in liquor outlets and advertising with the increase in consumption of alcohol by underage persons. One factor of this finding is the presumption that alcohol consumption is the social norm. The underage presume from this that adults are less concerned about their consumption and will in effect, seek sources to obtain alcohol. Adult disapproval is one of the key factors for controlling underage consumption.

Methods I have observed when I was Sheriff for the underage to acquire alcohol is still the case today in Marion County. The underage illegal acquisition has been greater from the convenience stores and grocery stores than from the liquor stores in Marion County. Liquor store owners have a vested interest in their business. They tend to train their clerks more thoroughly to check ID's and watch for other tell tale signs that tip them off to under age persons. The convenience store and grocery store clerks have a poor record in monitoring the underage person. One reason is the frequent turn over of employees in these businesses.

