

Kansas Family Policy Council
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Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 54

In Kansas we have struck the fair balance by not selling hard liquor in our grocery stores and convenience stores. If an adult wanted hard liquor they have gone to a liquor store.

According to an article in The Wichita Eagle, "Last year, the state's income from alcohol taxes, permit fees and fines amounted to nearly \$227 million."

I would like to ask you a question. Are our children more important than increasing the state coffers from the sale of hard liquor?

A new organization made up of Walmart, Dillions/Kroger, Quik Trip, KwikShop, Hy-vee, Hen House/Price Chopper, and Casey's General Store under the name "**Coalition for Jobs and Consumer Choice**" is once again presenting the argument that they should be able to sell hard liquor. *At what expense? Increased drunk drivers?* I met with an employee of Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) in Colorado this week. She assured me that these corporations are targeting several states including Colorado and South Dakota. MADD opposes the bill because they are concerned that grocery stores and convenience stores that employ many young people who are under 18 or 21 years of age would not be willing or able to ensure that every liquor transaction was conducted according to the law, and thus, put their underage employees in compromising positions. How could the State of Kansas ensure underage employees are protected?

Not my point, but as a citizen of Kansas, I can't imagine why you would want large corporations like Kroger, Hy-Vee, Quik Trip, Kwik Shop etc. to make a profit rather than the 766 liquor stores in Kansas, many of whom are family businesses. Researchers at Kansas University have said that 341 of the Kansas liquor stores would go out of business if this Bill became law. This Bill would take these 766 locations where liquor is currently sold and increase them to over 7,000 locations. Do we want greater liquor distribution and consumption? Big-box liquor stores? Imagine billboards, television commercials with liquor ads for stores that are frequented by young adults? I think not.

Do we really want Mom to go to the store to buy milk, bread and gin?

1. First and foremost this will only increase access of hard liquor to minors.
2. This can only result in increased alcoholism among minors in our state.
3. This can only result in increased juvenile crime.
4. The state has always had a bright line between the distribution and regulation of malt beverages and wine and hard liquor; and for good reason.

