

TO: Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee  
FROM: Dennison Woods, Ken-Mar Liquor, Wichita, KS  
DATE: February 16, 2011  
RE: Senate Bill 54

Mr. Chairman,

For the past 37 years I have been in the liquor business in Kansas. Currently, I own and operate Ken-Mar Liquor. There was a time in Kansas when applicants for a license had to have a hearing with the Director of Alcoholic Beverage Control in Topeka. There is merit in a system which holds an individual accountable for the sale of alcoholic liquor. It is a privilege, not a right, to be given a Liquor License. The responsibilities of selling this highly regulated product were made clear to me when I invested in this business. It is according to this agreement – this contract with the State of Kansas that I have invested in the liquor store business and maintained those obligations in good faith.

Now, it seems that Kansas is reconsidering its agreement with me and would like to grant this privilege to non-Kansas corporations with LESSER QUALIFICATIONS to sell alcoholic liquor to the public. They would not have to meet the same rules as an individual – and could even include businesses owned by criminals. Meanwhile, to keep my own liquor license, I would still have to keep a clean criminal record and be a U.S. citizen and stay out of the prostitution or illegal gambling business and so on.

The corporations' proposal seems to put a value to the investment I have made in the last 37 years by allowing me to sell my liquor license in the next three years, but then completely takes the value out of it by letting anyone get a beer or wine license as of January 1, 2012. **This bill has no real license cap.**

If every convenience store within a few blocks of my store gets a wine and beer license on January 1, there will be too many places selling wine and beer in my immediate neighborhood. Even if I wanted to sell the business that I have put so much of my life into – what value is it supposed to have at that point? Hard liquor is the slowest moving product on my shelves. So, my business will be at risk – but not one of those other businesses is in jeopardy of failing because they don't sell strong beer and wine right now. It wasn't part of their business model when they came to town.

I read in the newspaper that the big grocery stores and convenience stores are going to build more businesses and create jobs if this law passes. Right now, I do not see those companies caring about my community. Maybe a bigger convenience store will open and kill off some of the smaller ones – but there is only so much gasoline and tobacco to sell in any given community. Changing liquor laws won't create more grocery or more liquor sales in Wichita.

The liquor laws in Kansas have contained limitations to multiple stores and to selling other products for the reason that the state expects me to focus on safe and legal sales of alcoholic liquor and to be personally responsible for doing the job right. If the Legislature has decided that this is no longer important – then, you should untie my hands and allow my Kansas business to grow and change. I am not asking for the change – but if it is better for Kansas, then, don't I deserve the first chance to make it

