

**Top Cellars Select Wine and Spirits
11720 Quivira
Overland Park, KS 66210**

Chairman Pete Brungardt and members
Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs

Please reject Senate Bill 54. As the owner of Top Cellars Select Wine and Spirits in Overland Park, I ask you to support locally owned businesses and turn down this request. This bill slashes licensing laws – allowing non-Kansas citizens to get a liquor license.

If my store closes – it will mean the loss of jobs for adults – people who are over the age of 21 and are earning a living. These jobs are supporting adults and families. These are not after school jobs for teenagers. It is not wise to sacrifice those jobs in order to add a product to the grocery stores which will not add any jobs. The bill is intended to allow me to compete – but it starts with a major disadvantage. I would have to invest tens of thousands of dollars to compete in my current field of choice. The grocery stores can simply add the products to their shelves.

The economic study put forward by the proponents says liberal liquor laws will bring new business back across the state line. This assumes that customers go to Missouri to buy liquor. If anyone is going to Missouri just for liquor, it is because of the significant price difference – NOT the liquor laws. I see advertised specials in Missouri that are less than my wholesale cost on a regular basis. These prices are based on population and taxes – not because there are grocery stores in the business.

So, do Kansans go shopping in Missouri? Yes, some do. Missouri taxes are lower for gasoline. Missouri taxes are lower for tobacco products. Missouri taxes are lower for food. Unless we can do something about that cost comparison, putting wine next to the cheese at Costco isn't going to bring back those customers.

There is not a major migration to Missouri just for liquor. Kansas saw a boost to liquor sales once we passed our Sunday sales laws, and that recaptured a good portion of the cross border liquor sales. If we want to pick up a little more of that Sunday traffic, we could consider moving up the hours of sales on Sunday to let people buy their beer before the noon football games.

Sales of cereal malt beverage are around 1% of the overall sales of a grocery store. It can be up to 3% of the sales of a convenience store. Cereal malt beverage is not a priority product for these businesses and does not receive the majority of their attention. Even when these businesses sell wine and beer, these products are still a small percentage of sales. In my store, beer is around 45% of sales. At the store in Olathe, it is 55% of sales. As a result, we pay close attention to the sales of beer. My clerks are charged with the safe and legal sale of adult beverages and are able to give that task their full attention.

If I or one of my employees violates the law, my store will be fined and can be closed for a day or more. If one of the corporations benefited by this bill commits the same violation – will they will simply lock up the beer cooler for short period of time? If the whole grocery

