



KINGMAN
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To: The Members of the House Commerce & Economic Development Committee

From: Pat White, White's Foodliner

Date: February 7, 2012

Dear Chairman and members of the Kansas House Commerce & Economic Development Committee,

My name is Pat White, and I own four grocery stores in Western Kansas. They are located in Kingman, Medicine Lodge, Phillipsburg and Hugoton. Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for modernizing Kansas liquor laws.

I believe the time has come to let go of the past and update Kansas' outdated liquor laws. While most other states have updated their liquor laws over the years, Kansas has been slow to change. It is one of the few states that continue to prohibit the sale of full-strength beer, wine and spirits in grocery and convenience stores.

Modernized liquor laws would be good for our state. They would certainly provide a lifeline to small-town grocery stores, such as mine, by allowing us to offer alcoholic beverages for sale.

Running a rural grocery store is a tough business with constant pressure to make ends meet and provide enough service and product offerings to keep customers happy and the bottom line healthy. In recent years, we also have the challenge of remaining financially sound in communities with shrinking populations. Our towns need more people in order to prosper, but those people require resources in order to stay in town.

Updated liquor laws will allow small-town grocers to add product lines that can contribute almost immediately to our revenue stream, helping us to cover overhead and stay afloat. And, that means we can continue to offer a vital service to our residents who rely on us to provide healthy food products each and every day in a clean, wholesome environment.

Modernizing liquor laws will also level the playing field, giving all retailers the same opportunities—rather than granting the exclusive right to sell liquor to just one type of retailer. It would allow grocers to sell adult beverages and give liquor stores the right to sell food products.

Rural grocery stores are small, locally owned businesses, just like many liquor stores. And, we too have made substantial personal investments in our establishments. So, it seems unfair that the current liquor laws protect liquor stores while handicapping the ability of rural grocery stores to compete in a free marketplace. Why are they given preference over us?

House Commerce & Economic Development

Date: 02/07/12

Attachment #: 8-1

As a small-town, local grocery store owner, I am asking that you support updating Kansas liquor laws. By doing so, you would be backing a bill that eliminates an unfair advantage to liquor stores, an advantage that hampers the ability of small grocers to survive in an already difficult rural economy. And, because these small grocers are so important to the towns they serve, this bill would be good for our state as a whole.

Thank you for considering my point of view.

Pat White, Owner