

DATE: March 7, 2013

TO: Kansas Uncorked

FROM: Pat McFerron  
President  
Cole Hargrave Snodgrass & Associates, Inc.

RE: A Survey of 600 Registered Voters in Kansas  
Interviewing conducted January 7 – 10, 2013  
Margin of error: +/- 3.9%

Cole Hargrave Snodgrass & Associates is pleased to present this executive summary of its recent survey of 600 registered voters in Kansas. This survey reveals **that Kansas voters are ready to modernize their alcohol laws to include the sale of wine and regular strength beer in both grocery and convenience stores.**

At the onset of the survey, 54% favor expanding the availability of regular strength beer to grocery stores, while only 37% oppose doing so, with almost identical numbers for expansion to convenience stores. When it comes to wine, there is actually greater support (57% favor / 36% oppose) for making it available in grocery stores. While the Kansas City media market tends to lead support for these changes, expansion is also supported in the Wichita / Hutchinson media market (47% favor vs. 45% oppose) as well as in each of the six regions of the state we used in the study.

The real difference on the issue of alcohol expansion cuts along age lines. When it comes to allowing regular strength beer in both grocery and convenience stores, those under the age of 55 are very supportive (64% favor vs. 30% oppose). Those between the ages of 55 and 75 are mildly supportive (47% favor vs. 41% oppose) and the only group opposed are those over the age of 75 (38% favor vs. 57% oppose). The same pattern holds when looking at wine in both locations. When looking at Kansas demographic trends, it is clear that **support for expanding locations for the sale of wine and regular strength beer will continue to grow.**

The inclusion of spirits, however, sharply changes voter opinion. When voters are asked if they would like to see spirits sold in grocery stores, only 40% approve of this expansion while 58% oppose doing so. When compared to allowing the sale of regular strength beer, this represents a net shift of 35 points and a net change of 39 points from allowing wine to be sold in the same manner.

One interesting aspect of the availability of alcohol is that the expansion does not line-up along the social issue lines one might expect. For example, allowing the expansion of regular beer and wine evenly divides the pro-life community (42% of pro-life voters support expansion; 47% oppose). Among those Republicans who say they tend to vote for the more conservative candidate in Republican primaries, the difference on this issue is statistically insignificant as 43% support expansion.

One of the reasons conservatives support expanding where these products are available is that it is seen as a conservative free market issue. Fully 71% of all Kansans and 67% of

those with a history of voting in Republican primaries agree that the free market, not government, should decide where wine and beer are sold.

Voter attitudes on this issue do not dramatically change in either direction when arguments are given. Even after making oft-disputed arguments against expansion such as claiming it could lead to underage drinking, drunk driving and social ills such as divorce and bankruptcy, voters remain committed to expanding the availability of regular strength beer and wine. After this education in which these statements were offered with validity, 54% support both wine and regular strength beer being sold in both grocery and convenience stores with only 43% opposing.

Some of the positive messaging that was well received includes keeping economic activity and tax dollars from going to neighboring states, helping a nascent wine-making industry which could positively affect rural agriculture, as well as the free market aspect previously mentioned. In the Kansas City market, arguments about convenience are also salient.

If looking at this issue through a political lens, the risk for incumbents is to not do anything. The intensity is on the side of changing the law in this area, and given the age trends, it is clear that support for change will grow in the coming years. For those concerned with Republican primaries, on a statewide basis at least, any moral opposition is more than offset by the strong belief in free market principles.

*Pat McFerron is a native Kansan who is now President of the Oklahoma City based political research firm Cole Hargrave Snodgrass & Associates. McFerron has more than 20 years polling experience having conducted studies in 42 states. He has been the pollster of record for more than three-dozen successful congressional, U.S. Senate and gubernatorial campaigns. In addition, the firm conducts market research for a wide-range of corporate interests as well as legislative campaigns. McFerron has overseen more than 200 Kansas studies dating back to 1994.*