

Plaschka & Kramer Retail Liquor
1455 Hwy 59
Princeton, KS 66078

Testimony to House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee
Oppose House Bill 2200

Hello my name is Brandon Plaschka. In 2006 I bought the retail liquor store that my parents had owned for twenty years. Later that same year I bought the convenience store/gas station next door. These stores are in Princeton, KS about six miles south of Ottawa and they are the main hub in our small community. They provide many jobs and services to our rural patrons. My family and I are very giving to our community with our time, resources and financially as well.

Numerous economic studies say that income to a locally owned business is spent 5 to 7 times in the local economy. My business income stays here.

The current liquor laws do not prohibit anyone from getting retail liquor license. Kansas is not a control state, where the city or state owns retail sales. We have a competitive private system with only minimal location restrictions (200 feet from a church, school or college). We do not have limited licenses based on population. We do not have limited licenses based on jurisdiction. Many states do have those restrictions. Under current Kansas law, there could be a liquor store on every corner if the license requirements are met.

If the sale of liquor would help the rural grocery stores, then I encourage them to open a store. I did. My store is co-located with our convenience store. This message seems to be getting out, because several small town grocery stores have now opened a co-located liquor store. I have attached testimony from Dan Godek in Grainfield. A fellow liquor store owner in Herington has said that the new liquor store opened by their local grocery owner has increased the competitive pressure for his business – but at least they are competing on a level playing field. There are pictures below of several co-owned convenience and liquor stores.

My parents taught me long ago that it is very rare to get something for nothing. Yet that is what this bill is all about. I wanted to get into the liquor business so I bought a liquor store. Later I wanted to get into gas and convenience sales so I bought that store. If I wanted to get into the grocery business, a car business, jewelry, pharmacy, etc. I could. Just as the proponents of this bill can. Why should Kansas strip our regulatory system to give them the ability to sell liquor when they already can by meeting the qualifications? What is the benefit to Kansas?

We, liquor store owners, have been accused of not wanting or avoiding competition. Quite the contrary, we are not proposing to limit the number of liquor licenses or asking to change the laws to benefit us in any way. These laws have been in place a long time and are not broken, so why change them? The proponents have the same opportunities that I do. This is America and Kansas laws are set up to allow free enterprise. If they want to enter into the liquor business, they need only have the desire and the right qualifications, and if they want to set up right across the street from me, they can, and I wish them good luck!

As a liquor store owner and c-store owner, I already sell tobacco and motor fuels. The proponents will argue that they are giving me an opportunity to sell items other than liquor. This is a right I already have. If I wanted to sell what the big box stores sell, I could open one and go head to head with them. If I wanted to be a grocery store, I could open a grocery store. I'm not asking for that because I don't want to sell those products.

I have chosen my career path just as most of you have chosen what you want to do with your life. Imagine someone asking for a part of what you have invested so much in – but they don't want to earn the license you have earned and they don't want to obey the laws that you obey or be subject to the same penalties.

Many of us represent family businesses, which have been here for decades. These businesses are our livelihood and lifelong investment. The proponents of this bill are likely hard working folk as well and many of them are maintaining family legacies, surely we can all see that if the tables were turned and we wanted to take something from them, it would be like asking for something for nothing.

Respectfully,
Brandon Plaschka



House Commerce Committee

Kansas Legislature

February 12, 2015

Re: Oppose Uncork Legislation

My name is Dan Godek and I own Harvest Market and Harvest Spirit in Grainfield, KS. I operate a small town grocery store and adjacent liquor store. Attached are photos of these two businesses both inside and out.

Several years ago when "Uncork Kansas" was still in its infancy stage I polled my grocery store customers asking their thoughts on liquor in grocery stores. Overwhelmingly they voiced their distaste for the idea. One mother in particular said she did not want to wait in line at the grocery store with her kids while standing next to a guy buying a bottle of vodka.

This is not a family friendly idea, not in the least. It became apparent that Uncork Kansas would not be an option for me in relation to adding liquor at my location. So two years ago I added on 1100 square feet with separate entrances and a solid window to my office and named it Harvest Spirit.

Not only has Harvest Spirit been successful, it has brought new customers to Harvest Market and eased the burden of utility expenses by splitting them between the two businesses. My customers are happy and I am happy!

I grew up in Omaha, Nebraska. When I go back to visit, it is a shame to see that none of the niche liquor businesses that were there when I was young have survived. Kansas is a great place to own a small business and I hope it stays that way.

You are welcome to share my story and my images as you see fit. Call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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Check us out on the web:

http://lovesmalltownamerica.com/grainfieldks_harvestmarket.php
http://lovesmalltownamerica.com/grainfieldks_harvestspirit.php

