



House Commerce Committee
February 12, 2015
Please Oppose HB 2200 – Big Box Liquor Bill

To Committee Members,

I would like to introduce myself. My name is Matt Jabara, I am a registered voter in Wichita Kansas. I am also the owner of Jt's liquor Store located 3700 N. Woodlawn. My store is directly across the street from a newly remodeled Dillon's store and right beside a Walgreen's. My beautiful wife of 12yrs and I are starting our 5th year owning Jt's liquor. I have an 18yr old son that is a senior at Heights high school and a 9 yr old that is a 3rd grader at St. Thomas Aquinas. Jt's currently employs 6 employees. Sarah who's only income is Jt's and is a single mom and has 2 beautiful daughters that attend St. Thomas as well and is with us here today. John Hattrup who is a fireman in Sedgwick County and works at Jt's for his part time job. Tamera my manager who has 2 fantastic kids an 18yr old daughter and a son who is the same age as my 9yr old. Cody who also raises 2 beautiful daughters has been with us for 2 years. His wife runs a daycare at home during the day. Jeremy who has been with us for 5 yrs and has been with Jt's since before we purchased it. Jt's is his part time job as well; his career is in nuclear medicine. Dick who also has been with Jt's since before we purchased it and is looking forward to retiring in the near future.

If this bill were to pass each and every one of us would have to search for alternate means of income to help raise our families, go towards our retirement, or help to pay the bills in general.

I remember when I was a kid growing up, my grandfather owned Jabara's Grocery which was located at 21st and Grove with his two brothers, my great uncles George Jabara and Colonel James Jabara. The store was passed on to my father Brad Jabara. I used to go to the store to work after school, on weekends, and on the RARE occasion that I MIGHT have been in trouble at school. I used to scrape gum off the floor with a putty knife, sack ice, work in produce, and occasionally sack groceries. I have so many great memories of the grocery store, watching Don the butcher cut and wrap meat, Jim keep produce fresh and moist (peeling onions I hated the most!) and Tom and Larry Bell up in the cage cashing checks and security. I used to always think this was the life and I couldn't wait to run this family business. Things didn't work out like I anticipated.

A Dillon's store opened up down the road from Jabara's Grocery at 21st and Oliver. I was young at the time and don't remember the specifics. I do know that business started to slow down and I used to hear my dad talking to Tom and Jim about not being able to compete with Dillon's prices. He used to always say that he was buying his meat for what Dillon's was selling his for. He used to talk to the guy from

Wonder bread and Highland Dairy and ask how they were selling stuff at such a low price. I would hear them say “Brad, you are both paying the same for it, only guess they I’ve got is they can spread the cost between several stores.” My dad was forced to close down Jabara’s because we were unable to compete with Dillon’s. It wasn’t that many years after putting Jabara’s Grocery (the mom and pop grocery store) out of business that Dillon’s decided to close the closest location because it wasn’t producing the margins.

Here I am again almost twenty years later, fighting the same fight my dad had 20 years ago, with the SAME “BIG-BOX” store behind it all. I may be forced to give up my dream of having my sons continue to grow and run our family business. You’ve all been told and shown how this would be a HUGE mistake for Kansas. You’ve received a report on how this would increase costs to Kansas residents, how the price of libations would actually increase and not DECREASE as Uncork would like to say it. You’ve been shown how the top 300 sku’s would be the only ones to survive and that local KS. Distilleries and breweries wouldn’t have a chance on the shelves of our big box stores. You’ve seen that we don’t have anything close to a monopoly in the Kansas Liquor business. Quite honestly, the closest thing to a monopoly in any industry in Kansas is the grocery stores; which are controlled predominately by Dillon’s(Kroger), Wal-Mart and Hy-vee.

I hope you will think about the mom and pop LOCALLY OWNED businesses that would be put out of business; just like my families grocery store. I hope you would never agree to allow this bill to make it out of committee. This bill or one of similar nature has been proposed and advocated by Uncork Kansas for the last three years. Past committee members have agreed it’s just BAD for Kansas and BAD for KS small business, and I hope you will as well.

So from my beautiful bride, my sons, my unbeatable employees and all of Jt’s we hope you too will see this as the Big Box, big corporate America again trying to run all of Kansan’s out of business for their own gains .

Thank you,

Matt Jabara