

Email to all Legislators

House Bill offers Kansans choice and convenience, while stimulating economy



Uncork Kansas Proposes Legislation to Modernize State Liquor Laws

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TOPEKA, KAN. —January 28, 2015 – Uncork Kansas introduced new legislation in the House of Representatives Federal and State Affairs committee today, the first step in their continued legislative effort to modernize state liquor laws. Current law prohibits convenience and grocery stores from selling adult beverages. Under the proposed bill, state law would change to allow c-stores and grocers to sell regular strength beer instead of 3.2% beer. The bill also permits grocery stores to purchase a liquor license from an existing owner to protect existing liquor store owners who don't want to compete in a competitive market environment. Liquor store owners will also be able to expand their merchandising to sell ice, mixers, and other non-alcoholic products. The bill will foster economic growth, recapture lost sales to bordering states, and provide Kansans the choice and convenience of where to purchase legal adult beverages.

“Kansas consumers win when retailers compete. They win on price, selection, and the overall shopping experience,” said David Dillon, Uncork Kansas chairman and former chairman and CEO of supermarket and convenience store The Kroger Co. “As grocers, we are used to helping our customers get the products they want to buy. Current Kansas law doesn't allow for that. Consumers should have the ability to choose when and where they make purchases—and businesses operating in a free market should be afforded the right to meet customer demand.”

According to opinion polling, a clear majority of Kansans support changing the law to allow convenience and grocery stores to carry full-strength alcoholic beverages. Polling also showed nearly a quarter of all Kansans have left the state to purchase alcohol across the border – and most said they would stay in-state for their purchases when the law is changed. Dillons' customers across Kansas also voiced similar opinions regarding a desire for change. During a recent state-wide Uncork Kansas awareness campaign, store customers were invited to sign a postcard to share their viewpoints with legislators and to join a texting initiative. The response was overwhelming, resulting in more than 7,000 hand-written postcards signed during the 12-hour campaign.

“Kansans deserve as much consumer choice and competition for their hard earned dollars as possible,”

Senate Majority Leader Terry Bruce (R-Nickerson) said. "This bill takes a responsible, common sense approach towards modernizing some of our state's most outdated regulations. As a proponent of free market solutions, I proudly support this measure."

Kansas is one of only five states that still retails 3.2% beer and remains one of a handful of states granting exclusive right to sell wine and liquor to state-licensed liquor stores.

"Our customers deserve better. Existing law is anti-consumer, restricts economic growth, and in many cases, drives Kansans across state lines in search of a more convenient way to shop," Dillon said.

A hearing for the Uncork Kansas bill will take place in early February, but the date has not been set yet.



About Uncork Kansas:

Uncork Kansas is a movement to eliminate anti-consumer liquor laws so Kansans have a choice in where they buy their adult beverages. The coalition is comprised of large and small retailers who have banded together to pass legislation that will give their customers the opportunity to enjoy the free market retail of beer, wine, and spirits. For more information, please visit www.uncorkkansas.com.

About Dillon Stores:

Dillon Stores, headquartered in Hutchinson, Kan., is a division of The Kroger Company, one of the nation's largest retail grocery chains. Dillon Stores operates 82 stores in Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska and employs more than 12,000 associates. In 2011, Dillon Stores celebrated its 90th anniversary, proudly serving Kansas communities. Dillon Stores focuses its charitable efforts on supporting hunger relief, health and wellness initiatives, local schools, and grassroots organizations in the communities it serves. For more information on Dillon Stores, please visit our website at www.dillons.com.

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