



**Written Testimony before House Commerce & Economic Development Committee
House Bill 2532
Submitted by J. Kent Eckles, Vice President of Government Affairs**

Tuesday, February 7th, 2012

The Kansas Chamber of Commerce appreciates the opportunity to present testimony in favor of HB 2532.

Economic development

Our antiquated liquor laws are hurting the Kansas economy. Modernized liquor laws will bring back Kansas dollars that are currently being siphoned off to neighboring states. They will also attract more business to the state, which will create jobs and more growth. This means more money pumped into local economies.

QuikTrip and HyVee are just two examples of our member companies that have stated they will not expand in Kansas until liquor laws are modernized. As some of you may recall, QuikTrip even razed one of its Kansas stores a few years ago, and rebuilt it just a few feet east, in a state with more modern liquor laws. More than 1,700 businesses support this bill because they know it is good for business and for the economy. These businesses alone represent more than 35,000 jobs and contribute in excess of \$200 million in state and local revenue.

Free enterprise, fairness and competition

Modernized liquor laws support free enterprise and encourage competition, both of which are basic tenets of our economic system. Lifting restrictions on liquor sales for grocery and convenience stores—and on food sales for liquor stores—creates a level playing field and ends what many consider a legislated monopoly.

Expanded business opportunities

Modernized liquor laws will increase opportunities for grocery and convenience stores by allowing them to sell adult beverages. They will also create new growth opportunities for liquor stores by permitting them to sell food items that were previously prohibited. In states where restrictions have been lifted, liquor stores have continued to prosper. In fact, national statistics show that of the five cities with the most liquor stores per capita, four allow wine sales in grocery stores.

House Commerce & Economic Development

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Small business development

Bringing more business into our state will only help grow small business. More economic development is always good for small business and provides an environment in which they can thrive and grow.

We believe that modernized liquor laws would be a boost to the Kansas economy, creating business opportunities and taking back revenues that are flowing to our border states. It would also stimulate free enterprise and small business growth. Uncork Kansas is good for business, and it's good for our state. We urge the Committee to pass HB 2532 favorably.

The Kansas Chamber, with headquarters in Topeka, Kansas, is the leading statewide pro-business advocacy group moving Kansas towards becoming the best state in America to live and work. The Chamber represents small, medium, and large employers all across Kansas. Please contact me directly if you have any questions regarding this testimony.



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