

Members of the Committee,

First off, thank you for your time. I am writing you today in favor of a bill (SB - 2363) that would allow Breweries with a Taproom License to allow minors inside, given that they are:

- 1) With adults over the age of 21
- 2) They cannot sit at the bar
- 3) They are not in the taproom past 10pm

Members of the Committee, I strongly believe that a bill such as this one would

offer a benefit to many of the small businesses in the state, with very little drawback. Let me begin by describing why I believe this will benefit small businesses in the state. The "Taproom" License in the state of North Dakota is, in layman terms, the "little guy" of the brewers licenses. This is the license for spaces that are too small to produce large enough quantities of beer to require a distributor, and procure most of their money via on premise consumption at the taproom. Hence the name of the license.

This generally also means that these spaces are too small for a kitchen. Which is currently the only difference in our licenses with the "other" types of breweries that prevents us from having minors in our taprooms. There are obviously other differences in what we are and aren't allowed to do. But in terms of having minors in taprooms, if only our spaces were large enough to have a kitchen, we could then have minors inside. However, I believe that it is our "smallness" itself that, in fact, should make us more qualified, not less, to be allowed to have minors inside. Let me elaborate.

Because the Taproom License is focused on Taproom sales, that means we must build incredibly strong ties to the community, since this is where most of our income comes from. With that in mind. We often find ourselves doing things to build the community up around us, such as hosting pet adoption themed 5k races. Or brewing a specialty beer for "1,000 Trees for Minot".

We, along with other breweries our size, often also find ourselves as entertainment hubs for our community for things like live music, etc. However, due to the restrictions on our license. Every time we want to host events of this nature, we must make special requests to both the city and state in order to have minors present. These fees begin to add up, not to mention that we are limited in our number of these we can use annually.

Allowing minors under the above conditions would allow us to continue to build our community by better including whole families. Also, no consideration is given to the fact that we often outsource food by bringing in food trucks (more community building and supporting OTHER local businesses), in whether our space has a "kitchen".

Moreover, and I believe this is a more important point, Brewery Taprooms are NOT bars. Allowing minors into Brewery Taprooms is, I will argue, actually safer than the how the law is currently set up. As the law stands now, if a Brewery includes a kitchen, that allows them to have minors....however, that kitchen ALSO allows the sales of LIQUOR on those same premises. A brewery Taproom is ONLY allowed to sell beer. Therefore, as the law currently stands, people could go to a brewery with a kitchen, and have shots of alcohol next to their child, but are not allowed to have a beer at a brewery with a Taproom license with their child accompanying them. To me this is simply a common sense change, in this regard. Another point that I believe is relevant here; is that to my knowledge, every other brewery with a Taproom license closes well before normal bar closing time. We simply don't see late night traffic, and therefore generally are closed by midnight, even on weekends. I say this, because in my experience, people do not drink and become intoxicated during the early evening (like at a Taproom), the same way that they do in the early morning hours at a bar. This aligns with the limitation of times minors would be allowed inside and supports our differentiation from a typical "bar"

Lastly, this law would bring us into alignment with other neighboring states. Both Minnesota and Montana allow accompanied minors inside their equivalent of a Brewery Taproom.

Let me close my argument for this bill by telling a story from recent weekend trip. My wife and I took our children on a trip to Fargo. I delivered beer to several stores and my wife had her quarterly meeting for the State Board of Barber Examiners. We decided we wanted to go out for a beer after our dinner. But since we had our children with and were out of town traveling and had no access to childcare, our choices were limited. We might have taken our business to another GREAT small town Brewery Taproom and HUB of their community of Mapleton to Icewind Brewery. But instead (not for the first time), since we had the children, we went across the river to Moorhead to Junkyard Brewery and took our business out of state. I have personally seen this many times at my own establishment. Parents traveling, trying to visit the brewery but leave because they have children. As more and more breweries open nationwide, beer tourism is a real thing. And with our Taproom License essentially being the "startup" license, a change like this would really be a great benefit.

This bill has a LOT of potential to do good in many North Dakota communities and help some of the small businesses working hard to build their communities.

As a side note, while we had our children at Junkyard both we and they had a lovely time. There were other families there with their children. The people that made a place for us to sit next to them chatted and were friendly with the kids. We played card games and had a wholesome evening. Hopefully the same can be said inside my establishment soon.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Eric Johnson – Atypical Brewery & Barrelworks