

LB 178
General Affairs Committee
Testimony of Chris Wagner
Project Extra Mile
February 3, 2025

Good afternoon, Chair Holdcroft and members of the General Affairs committee. My name is Chris Wagner, and I am here representing Project Extra Mile, a network of community partnerships working in Nebraska to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harms. We are here in support of LB 178 and want to thank Senator Clouse for bringing this bill.

Requiring mandatory server alcohol training of all employees of a liquor licensed establishment is a commonsense step to protect the business, patrons, and surrounding community. All employees engaged in the sale, service, or mixture of alcoholic drinks as well as those providing security and verifying customer's age ought to be familiar with the Nebraska Liquor Control Act and the responsibilities of both the business and its employees.

Currently, employees are only required to complete training if the business has been found guilty of violating the Liquor Control Act or the Liquor Control Commission's regulations, for example selling alcohol to a minor during an alcohol retail compliance check. Mandatory server training has the potential to decrease overservice of patrons, sales to minors, and many of the harms associated with illegal sales, including but not limited to impaired driving.

It's not an exaggeration to say that this bill will save lives. 11% of businesses sold alcohol to minors during compliance checks by local and state law enforcement in Omaha last year. Proper training of employees could significantly decrease the number of sales to underage youth regardless of whether it is a compliance check or the real thing. Why wait for a tragedy to occur before requiring training?

Impaired driving continues to be a huge problem in our state. A January [Omaha World Herald](#) story shared that the Nebraska State Patrol has seen a 135% increase in DUI arrests around the Omaha area while the [Lincoln Journal Star](#) reported statewide increases in DUIs by the Nebraska State Patrol and Lincoln Police Department in December. Mandatory training of all employees on the front end will make it easier for employees to identify and refuse the sale of alcohol to visibly intoxicated patrons and keep our roads safer. I'm sure the members of this committee have read the many headlines over the years of the tragic alcohol-related traffic deaths in our state. These aren't just numbers, they are mothers, fathers, grandparents, siblings, and children.

In the end, mandatory training will benefit businesses by reducing their violations of the law and the penalties that they would be subject to as a result of those violations.

Please support LB 178, thank you.