

**LB 856**  
**Revenue Committee**  
**Testimony of Chris Wagner, Project Extra Mile**  
**February 18, 2026**

Good afternoon, my name is Chris Wagner, and I am here representing the Project Extra Mile coalition, a statewide network of partners working to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harms in Nebraska. We support LB 856.

This bill aims to reinvest in low-income communities that experience disproportionate health burdens and neighborhood disinvestment, accompanied by high concentrations of alcohol sales that fuel crime, nuisance activity, and poor health. There are currently 74 census tracts in nine counties throughout our state.

A 2017 study found that residents living in neighborhoods characterized by high poverty typically drank twice as much in a week and engaged in binge drinking approximately four times as frequently as in other types of neighborhoods (Rhew et al., 2017).

This is important because research shows that even moderate drinking can cause at least seven types of cancer in the human body. In addition, higher alcohol outlet density has been found to increase rates of social & health problems related to drinking, such as violent crime, road crashes, sexually transmitted disease, child abuse & neglect, and emergency department visits (Ransome et al., 2019). These communities also experienced increased issues with disorderly conduct, noise complaints and other nuisances, as well as property damage (Sacks et al., 2020).

LB 856 seeks to create a 5% excise tax on businesses that primarily sell alcohol and tobacco for consumption off the premises. Research has consistently shown these types of businesses (liquor stores, convenience stores, gas stations) to carry a higher risk for neighborhoods than on-sale businesses like restaurants (Trangenstein, 2018)

Over 1,000 Nebraskans die each year due to alcohol. Beyond the loss of life, excessive drinking costs Nebraska over \$1 billion in healthcare expenses, lost work productivity, and criminal justice costs each year (Sacks et al., 2015).

Research has found that doubling alcohol taxes would reduce alcohol-related mortality by an average of 35%, traffic crash deaths by 11%, sexually transmitted diseases by 6%, violence by 2%, and crime by 1.4% (Wagenaar et al., 2010). There is a bill before this committee that would achieve those public health and safety aims while raising tens if not hundreds of millions of dollars – that bill is LB 330. However, LB 856 shines a light on how alcohol disproportionately hurts the most vulnerable among us and also warrants this committee's careful consideration.

We urge the committee to advance LB 856. Thank you.