

LB 899
General Affairs Committee
Testimony of Chris Wagner
Project Extra Mile
January 31, 2022

Good afternoon, Chairman Briese and members of the 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 opposition to LB 899 for multiple reasons. First, because it goes against scientific recommendations to reduce the availability of alcohol to prevent alcohol-related harms in communities (WHO, 2013-2020). By reducing the fees for tax-exempt organizations, this bill would encourage the proliferation of these events, thereby increasing the availability of alcohol in communities across the state. Second, these events are oftentimes focused on using alcohol as a fundraising tool, which can lead to illegal alcohol sales (sales to minors and intoxicated individuals). Third, tax-exempt organizations often use volunteers to run their events – these individuals have little or no training on the Nebraska Liquor Control Act – and those volunteers often drink alcohol as they work. As a result, these events carry a higher risk of illegal sales.

A 2008 study in the Omaha area found that the average length of a special designated license event run by a tax-exempt organization was seven-and-a-half hours. It's hard to fathom how any tax-exempt organization wouldn't be able to cover the current daily fee of \$40 with over seven hours of alcohol sales on the horizon.

The Liquor Control Commission has long recognized the importance of responsible beverage server training and has frequently asked the Legislature to require license holders to complete a mandatory training program to protect public health and safety. At a minimum, we would urge the committee to require the applicant to complete a certified training course before they are eligible for the reduced rate.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.