

Drinking concerns heard Ending two-fers is offered as a solution

By Michelle Kubic
Daily Nebraskan Staff Reporter

Some local liquor retailers Tuesday voiced opposition to the proposed multiple-drink law during a hearing of the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission. The law would end the common practice of offering multiple drinks for one price by prohibiting the selling or advertising of "two-fers" or "three-fers".

Russ Kelly of Omaha, representative of the Nebraska Licensed Beverage Association, said the rule would put further regulations on the industry and hinder the free enterprise system.

Jim Moylan, the association's attorney, said local establishments would not offer two-fers if it wasn't for the incentive needed in competitive markets.

"We are acquainted with drinking habits and are also concerned with alcohol-related problems," he said. "A person who abuses alcohol is annoying to customers and drives business away."

Terry Schaaf, attorney for the commission, said overseeing the orderly promotion of alcohol in the state is the commission's responsibility.

"The drafters don't want to prohibit the advertising of the promotion itself," he said, "they

want to prohibit an advertised price, based upon quantity consumed."

George Kilpatrick, co-owner operator of Dinsdales, a downtown bar and restaurant, said the advertising provision needs to be clear and applied equally.

"Is the consumer really being served if he's told there's a special but he's not given a price?"

James Hamilton, executive director of the Nebraska Council on Alcohol and Drug Education, Inc. said an alcohol-related business is not like any other business.

"Selling alcohol is not a right," he said. "It is a privilege given through a licensed system."

Helen Patzel, representing the Women's Christian Temperance Union asked the commission to ban all multiple drinks.

"The alcohol specials push more drinks on drivers as they go out in the heavy traffic," she said.

The Lincoln City Council, represented by Joe Hampton, expressed its support of the proposal.

"Every year we are budgeted tax dollars for dealing with alcohol related problems," he said.

"Are we operating in a responsible manner if we encourage drunkenness through multiple drinks?"

Hampton said Lincoln will deal with the problem on a local basis, if it is not dealt with on the state

level.

Some of the witnesses said the problem with alcohol consumption was a problem in human behavior and attitude.

"Eliminating two-fers is a step in eliminating the problem, but it will not solve it." Brenda Wiseman, executive director of the Alcoholism Council in Nebraska, said.

Kay Neil, a representative of the Mothers Against Drunk Drivers chapter in Omaha, also said curtailing the sales practices would limit activity but not solve the problem.

Members of the commission asked the witnesses to respond in writing to the proposal within the 30-day waiting period before the commission votes on the regulation.



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