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Testimony Re: SB 452, Sampling at Drinking Establishments

Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee

Presented by Ronald R. Hein

on behalf of

Kansas Restaurant and Hospitality Association

March 8, 2012

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

My name is Ron Hein, and I am legislative counsel for the Kansas Restaurant and Hospitality Association (KRHA). The Kansas Restaurant and Hospitality Association, founded in 1929, is the leading business association for restaurants, hotels, motels, country clubs, private clubs and allied business in Kansas. Along with the Kansas Restaurant and Hospitality Association Education Foundation, the association works to represent, educate and promote the rapidly growing industry of hospitality in Kansas.

KRHA supports SB 452, sampling at drinking establishments. This bill, which would put drinking establishments on the same level playing field that is recognized by legislation which passed the Senate earlier permitting retail liquor dealers and micro-distilleries to conduct sampling of product. You might recall that I raised this issue when SB 269 was heard by this committee, and that we had agreed not to attempt an amendment to SB 269, but, instead, to introduce our own legislation regarding sampling.

KRHA drinking establishment members have numerous customers who would like to be able to taste an alcoholic beverage (wine or otherwise) prior to making their purchase decision. But, pursuant to current law, our providers are unable to do so.

This legislation would avoid an unfair, illogical hodge-podge of sampling authority, and would provide, instead, a legislative structure which treats competing businesses fairly and equitably.

We appreciate this committee introducing this bill and for the Chairman scheduling a hearing on this issue.

Thank you very much for permitting me to testify, and I will be happy to yield to questions.