

HB 80

Sponsor Statement

“An Act relating to the hours during which sale of alcohol and entry on licensed premises is allowed; and providing for an effective date.”

I introduced HB 80 to put into place a uniform state law regarding bar closures and reduce the number of problem drinkers in public places.

The high costs of problem drinking are everywhere and many of our constituents expect the legislature to attempt to find ways of mitigating these costs.

Common sense and in some cases experience suggests the later the drinking hour in bars the higher the number of inebriates. As that number climbs the rise in problems associated with drinking also escalates. Additionally, law enforcement officials arrest a higher percentage of intoxicated drivers in the late night, early morning hours.

We as legislators are faced with basically three options.

1. No action (not acceptable to the public)
2. Response - Addressing costs of damage (taxes) (increased punishment)
3. Prevention - Reducing problem drinking (fewer public drinking hours)

House Bill 80 is designed to reduce the number of problem drinkers and is based on existing measures both in-state and nationally. It is strictly a policy call for the legislature to consider, but I do believe there is solid evidence that reducing early morning bar hours reduces the number of problem drinkers in public places.

My advice to those in the liquor industry is to support those laws and ordinances that help alleviate problem drinking or risk more stringent measures as the problems on our highways, on our streets and in the home continue to rise.