

2671 Testimony

Chair Holvey, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify before today on House Bill 2671. This bill was brought to my attention by a constituent of mine, Dan Miner, who I believe is also here today to testify in support of this bill.

My district is home to a disproportionately high number of liquor stores relative to other parts of the state. In fact, we house the most profitable liquor store in the state, which on its own generated nearly 11 million dollars in sales last year. As Mr. Miner will testify, these agents have worked hard to grow their business. However, despite their efforts, it has been 15 years since the Oregon Liquor Control Commission has revisited their formula for agent compensation. This is despite growth in operating costs, including the recent increase in the minimum wage, and rising rents for commercial space.

I recognize that better compensation for liquor agents in our state is a zero sum game. If their slice grows, some other aspect of OLCC's operations must shrink. That is why House Bill 2671 does not prescribe a specific adjustment to compensation, but instead creates a task force to examine this issue, so that we can determine how best to adjust compensation for these businesses.

I know that we are in a tight budget situation this biennium, which is why this bill is designed not to cut into revenues, but instead to start a conversation on ways in which we can adjust the compensation for liquor agents to respect their increasing sales and rising costs. Thank you again for inviting me today, and for agreeing to hear this bill.