

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

March 3, 1997

LB 17, 249

because we have retailers in all shapes and sizes, identifying a single amount or number of a day's penalty, makes it difficult to draw appropriate distinctions. It was for this reason that the Liquor Control Commission in their annual report said, why don't you give us not a mandatory power, but a voluntary...not a voluntary power, but a permissive authority to take away days of selling alcohol. So it doesn't make a difference if you're a big retailer or a small retailer, what you get taken away is the power to profit from selling liquor. That way, if it's a small operation, the penalty is related to their bottom line, but it's not different from the penalty that suffers if you are a larger retailer. That what you take away is the profit from selling liquor in violation of the law. Now, the committee didn't do that. That was LB 17, and the committee chose not to do that. Frankly, that's my preference, and I'll tell you why. It seems to me that it has the kind of penalty that distinguishes between large and small employers. It is not confiscatory in the sense that it has a high penalty for a small retailer, or a small penalty for a large retailer, which is what we get trapped into with the current situation. However, that the committee decides to do anything in this field is, I think, laudatory, and I congratulate the committee because...let me make no justification or apologia for Lancaster County, our minors in possession are going up. We got more minors in possession, not less. Apparently, at our high school parties they don't test zero, zero, zero. Apparently, there's a little bit of alcohol in the blood content in Lancaster County, and they're getting them from someplace. Now a couple of years ago, the grocery stores and the convenience stores said, gosh, we have to compete. Give us the right to sell liquor. Then they said, you know, we can't have people that are 21 selling liquor, we've got to have the power to let minors sell liquor, which they did. And we've done this over and over again, and yet we have more and more sales to minors. We have made accommodation after accommodation to business on the selling of liquor. It is time we exact, not with their permission, but from our best perspective, an appropriate deterrent for a problem that exists. We had over a thousand violations last year, a thousand violations last year, of liquor laws by liquor sellers in this state. And now...I'm sorry...make that...adjustments...that's the total number of days. There were 400 plus violations of liquor laws in this state. I've passed out a form to that