

April 25, 1979

LB 221

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Hoagland, are you going to take the amendment?

SENATOR HOAGLAND: Yes.

SPEAKER MARVEL: The Chair recognizes Senator Hoagland.

SENATOR HOAGLAND: Mr. Speaker and colleagues, our amendments are printed in the Journal on the page indicated by Mr. O'Donnell. Now Senator Dworak and I are presenting this so-called off sale compromise amendment. About an hour ago a letter was passed to each of you explaining basically the substance of this amendment. Now let me indicate why, at least for my purposes, I can't speak entirely for Senator Dworak, I have decided to bring this amendment before the body. Now I think it is very important before we take the drastic step of raising the drinking age to twenty-one, that this Legislature be given the opportunity to consider this alternative to that action. Now we have repeatedly heard throughout the last several weeks that there are two basic reasons for raising the drinking age. The first basic reason is the trickle down problem. We hear that there are a lot of nineteen year olds and a lot of twenty year olds that are buying liquor at liquor stores and they are taking it out and they are selling it to fourteen year olds and fifteen year olds and sixteen year olds and seventeen year olds and I think that we all agree that that is a problem and that we need to deal with that problem in some fashion. Now the other major justification that is being given for increasing the drinking age is that the nineteen and twenty year olds are getting themselves drunk. They are going out in a field with a case of beer, parked in a car someplace and then they are getting themselves into automobile accidents on the way home or they are drinking in bars and getting themselves in automobile accidents on the way home. Now let me make it clear that this particular amendment takes care of the first problem but it doesn't take care of the second problem. If we really want to take care of the second problem we ought to think about a dram shop amendment which will impose liability on bartenders who knowingly serve drinks to intoxicated persons but we are not dealing with that problem here. This compromise is designed to deal principally with the trickle down problem. Now let me emphasize that I think that this is a much less drastic reaction to the problems that people are complaining of around the state than simply raising the drinking age from nineteen to twenty-one and I think if we are going to do anything in this area we ought to first try this out.