



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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LD 1334.

This bill title has gotten a lot of attention. I have had people approach me, and call me asking what it's about. This bill was a request of substance abuse counselors that are in my district.

The purpose of this bill title may appear to be based on deterring theft. And I acknowledge that may be a benefit to this bill. , the purpose is

purely driven by substance abuse counselors hearing over and over again the struggles of individuals trying to be sober. Individuals trying to perform simple tasks like paying for fuel or other goods and services often have to move containers of alcohol in baskets in order to swipe their cards.

Are we all familiar with the payment terminal at the gas station, the basket of little alcohol bottles next to the kiosk. ?

Several years ago the state of Maine

Required Tabaco products be removed and place out of access. Why not alcohol?

We as Legislators this year have heard from and will hopefully invest time, and money into our recovery community. Place yourself in a position where you are struggling with alcoholism, have put the work into detoxing and committed to not drinking and staying sober. Now you must be confronted with alcohol while trying to pay for your daily goods and services.

Please read my attached sheet from a substance abuse counselor in my district.

The purpose of the 48 inches from a payment Kiosk was meant to mirror an arm's reach approach to this issue. We are open to

discuss our options to make this
successful during work session.
Questions.

Tracey A. Tarr
Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor
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177 Gross Point Road
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12/30/2024

To Whom it May Concern:

Recently I had opportunity to speak to several Lawmakers and potential Lawmakers as they campaigned for office. I told each one that I wanted something. Steven Bishop who is now representing my community in Augusta listened.

I have over the years treated people with Alcohol Use Disorder as well as other substance use disorders. A substance use disorder develops over time and at first it is fun to use the substances. Over time for some people the alcohol takes over and the compulsion to use despite catastrophic consequences becomes very strong.

The lower brain the part that has to do with survival is especially affected by alcohol. After a period of use, the lower brain may begin to equate alcohol use with survival.

Here is an example of how that lower brain works to help human beings survive: Many of us have had the experience of being around a small child that has just begun to walk. They are unsteady and unused to this skill. Toddlers in the beginning fall a lot! The lower brain or survival brain wants to protect this small being. So, when this child falls many of us have reacted, with out thinking, catching that soft baby head before it hits the corner of a coffee table or the floor. We do this with out thinking. This is survival and our lower brain is not burdened with thinking about this action it just reacts. As if we had superpowers, we catch this child before it is hurt!

Our cortex, the big thinking part of the brain makes decisions after considering data. This cortex is too slow to make that decision to stop the baby from being injured. It is 3 seconds slower to act than our lower survival brain.

So once a person develops addiction this lower survival brain takes over and sees the substance-alcohol as the goal, the key to survival. That means when alcohol becomes available the individual may with out thinking things through obtain the substance.

In convenience stores many not all have an easily accessible display of nip bottles. If someone is paying for gas, getting lunch, or buying cigarettes that little display is there to tempt. Remember the cortex is slower to react, and many times doesn't have time in that short window to weigh the consequences of buying the bottle. So, an individual may pick up the bottle and add it to the purchases without time to think it through. Once it is in hand the person with the alcohol use disorder is probably going to drink it which can lead to a full-blown relapse.

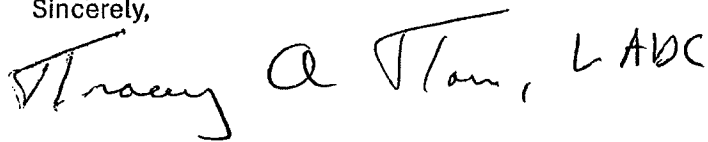
Over the last 27 years that I have worked as a Substance Abuse Treatment Provider I have heard this story repeatedly. The individual has days or weeks of sobriety on ill-conceived impulse buys the alcohol from the convenience store counter.

Additionally, these bottles are easy to access and underaged people and young children see the small bottles and are attracted to such things. Generally, these bottles are eye height for children and with attractive labels. I don't have any statistics to share but I also believe that these bottles can be more easily shop lifted by minors since there is no barrier protecting the bottles.

Many years ago, the state banned cigarettes from counters, from the eyes of children. I believe we have an obligation to protect both young people and those who struggle to stay sober.

We should return the counter space to a neutral place where gas can be paid for with out handy temptation. Yes, the individual can still ask for the bottles if they are behind the counter or out of sight but in those seconds where the individual asks for the nip bottle there is time to reconsider. Remember the 3 seconds difference between impulse and conscious thought. It might just be enough time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracey A. Tarr, LADC". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tracey A. Tarr

Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor

LC-2541