



State Senator Sheila Harsdorf

Date: March 11, 2015

To: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Small Business, and Tourism

Fr: Senator Sheila Harsdorf

Re: Senate Bill 37—Paint and Sip Studios

Dear Chair Moulton and Committee Members,

Thank you for holding a public hearing and executive session today on Senate Bill 37 (SB 37). I appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of this legislation.

SB 37 makes two changes to state law that will help foster the establishment of paint and sip studios in Wisconsin. Paint and sip studios are a relatively new business concept, where people can learn to paint with friends and family while enjoying wine or other alcoholic beverages. These studios are opening up in states throughout the U.S. and there are already nearly 20 operating in Wisconsin.

First, this bill would allow underage persons to be present in the paint and sip studios. With certain exceptions, current law prohibits minors from being in a place of business where alcohol is served on the premises without their parent present. Current exceptions include bowling centers and movie theaters. Paint and sip studios want to offer their classes to people of all ages and are also becoming popular for hosting birthday parties and special events where those under the legal drinking age may be in attendance. The bill does not allow minors to be served alcohol, it only allows them to be in the establishment.

Secondly, SB 37 would clarify the exemption under state law allowing certain businesses to obtain Class "B" beverage licenses. Current law generally prohibits the issuance of Class "B" licenses to establishments where other business is being conducted, with exemptions for certain businesses such as bowling centers and restaurants. This bill would specifically add painting studios to the list of exempted businesses. Current law is unclear as to whether or not painting studios are eligible for a license, and this has created a roadblock for studios in some communities.

Rep. Knudson and I drafted and introduced this legislation at the request of a small business owner who sought to open a paint and sip studio in our district. We are bringing this measure forward to support these popular small businesses and allow them the opportunity to provide a fun and unique entertainment venue.

The identical companion to SB 37 had a public hearing in the Assembly Committee on State Affairs and Government Operations last week and there were no speakers or registrants against the proposal. That Committee unanimously recommended the bill for passage in executive session earlier this week.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. I encourage your support for SB 37.

Background

My name is Brandon Rehmus, and I am co-owner of the Cheers Pablo Franchise in Hudson, WI. Cheers Pablo is a paint and sip business. The paint and sip industry is a newer industry that gained its strong hold in the South, and has started to bare entry into the Midwest. We offer the community a old artistic pastime with a new twist; our studio provides customers a unique and engaging way to express their artistic talents in a fun and inviting environment. Although the majority of our clientele are women, people of any age and any level of artistic ability are welcome. We have a panel of artists that take the painters through each painting step-by-step until each person has created their own masterpiece. During the class, we offer a full range of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages and snacks for purchase. A painting session usually takes about 2-2.5 hours, and most clients consume 1-2 drinks during this time. I want to make it clear that this is a business in which painting is the primary activity and drinking is secondary.

I am here today in support of Senate Bill 37. If passed, this bill will allow my business to welcome children and adults under the age of 21 into my establishment to express their artistic abilities without the need for parents or guardians to be present. This would be similar to golf courses or bowling alleys where the public is able to participate in a recreational activity alongside of minors without the requirement of parental supervision. Let me paint a picture for you quickly: My daughter turns 10 on April 10th and wishes to have several of her friends come paint and enjoy birthday cake at the Cheers Pablo studio. Without passing Senate Bill 37, each of her friend's parents would need to accompany their child to the party, or they would not be able to attend. Another example is for college students who are under the age of 21 that want something fun to do. We live near the UW-River Falls college campus. We feel we should be able to offer our painting sessions to college students in our community that wish for a fun and safer alternative to some more common college weekend activities.

There are several other recreational industries, such as golf courses, bowling alleys, and performing arts centers, which have the same business model as we do and currently fall under the exemption that we seek. These places, just like Cheers Pablo, all have one thing in common: they provide the community with a recreational activity. Therefore, Cheers Pablo and other paint and sip businesses should meet the requirements for the exemption.

