

September 12, 2018

Senator Roger Roth  
State Capitol—Madison, Wisconsin

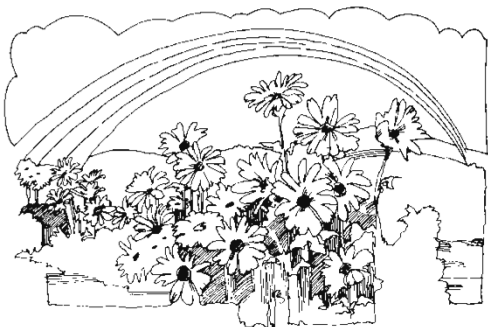
RE: Work of the Study Committee on Alcohol Beverages Enforcement

Dear Senator Roth,

On August 22<sup>nd</sup> I led a group of Agricultural Event Venue (AEV) owners in testifying at the Wisconsin Legislative Council's Study Committee on Alcohol Beverages Enforcement. Never in my 62 years as resident of the US—since arriving as a refugee from Hungary at the age of 12—have I witnessed such an unethical display of business protectionism disguised as a legitimate process to improve laws!

Here is what I witnessed at the hearings on July 25 and August 22:

1. A committee organized with the obvious intent to eliminate the competition posed by the new trend in weddings at Agricultural Event Venues.
2. A committee NOT organized to develop legitimate refinement of alcohol laws with the intent to prevent or resolve existing social problems.
3. A committee chaired by Representative Swearingen, owner of a supper club that has lost much of its banquet business to AEVs—a clear conflict of interest.
4. A committee chaired by Swearingen, a past president of the Tavern League of Wisconsin.
5. A committee whose membership is stacked with lawyers and members of the Tavern League.
6. A committee further stacked by owners of businesses that are on the losing end of the trend toward grand outdoor wedding celebrations.
7. A committee without a single AEV member, the very group that the committee's work is intended to drastically impact.



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Is this the kind of government ethics that your Republican administration is proud to hold forth as a standard of leadership?

I am enclosing the PowerPoint visuals I used during our testimony at the Committee hearing on 8/22/2018. There are three separate segments. The first, titled 'Nagy Alcohol Committee - Introduction', set the stage for our WATA group's testimony, focusing on the Constitutional basis of our concerns. The second, titled 'Nagy Alcohol Committee - Homestead Meadows', explains the history and current operation of my family's farm, Homestead Meadows. The third, titled 'Nagy Alcohol Committee - Summary', summarizes the key points of our entire group's testimony.

Senator Roth, I invite you to view our recorded testimony on Wisconsin Eye. Recognizing that you are a busy legislator, I offer the following concise summary of the key principles involved.

The essence of the work of this Committee is not about barns, or weddings, or even alcohol. It's about our Constitution. The US Constitution guarantees us life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It does not, however, guarantee that our business will always be successful in the face of evolving customer preferences and competitive market forces.

This Committee is a blatant effort by a powerful lawmaker, Rep. Swearingen, with a livelihood challenged by changing customer preferences, to use the legislative process to suppress competition and regain market position. It is further an attempt by the Chairman to respond to the powerful political influence of the Tavern League of Wisconsin.

To witness this in these United States is a great disappointment to this immigrant. To witness this as an effort by a pro-business Republican administration is, frankly, unbelievable. It should not go unnoticed that it is led by the Vice-chairman of the Assembly's Committee on Tourism and a member of the Assembly's Committee on Small Business Development.

I have asked you before and I ask you again to find time to visit Homestead Meadows. We are minutes from your home. A visit on any weekend wedding day would demonstrate to you the beauty of this showcase Wisconsin farm and the thoughtful elegance of its business model.

Many thanks for your engagement in this work critical to the survival of our small business.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen M. Nagy'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'S' and 'M'.

Stephen M. Nagy  
C: Members – Study Committee on Alcohol Beverages Enforcement