

JANEEN SOLLMAN
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 30



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 2, 2021

Timothy G. Sekerak
Chief Clerk of the House
Oregon House of Representatives
State Capitol Building
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Vote Explanation for Senate Bill 317

Dear Chief Clerk Sekerak,

The hospitality industry, and our restaurants more directly, have suffered greatly through the effects of this pandemic. Open. Close. Indoor. Outdoor. Take-out. I've heard from restaurant owners in House District 30 about their difficulties navigating the myriad of restrictions and options available to try and survive through this pandemic. I appreciate the efforts of my colleagues to look for ways to provide relief to the restaurant industry, especially hit hardest in their district, I just don't think that Senate Bill 317 will move the dial as much as needed. I voted no for several reasons. I was concerned over the possible unintended consequences and bill's reliance on cocktails-to-go being the answer to a restaurant's financial distress.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic recession have negatively affected many people's mental health. 53% of adults in the United States have reported that the pandemic has negatively affected their mental health. Symptoms of anxiety disorder, depression and thoughts of suicide have increased considerably. I voted no because making alcohol more easily available to Oregonians already suffering through isolation and job losses is not the right move. According to the Oregon Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission, Oregon has some of the highest substance use disorder rates in the country, and the most common disorder in our State is an alcohol use disorder. Alcohol use is the third leading cause of preventable deaths in Oregon—about 2,000 of our neighbors, colleagues, friends, and family members die each year from alcohol-related causes. Also, OHA and ECO Northwest recently released a report that found the cost to Oregon in 2019 of excessive drinking was \$4.8 billion. That's an amount that is equivalent to the annual revenue in 2019 of corporations such as American Express, Best Buy, and Delta Airlines.

I held a restaurant roundtable in my district and restaurant owners in House District 30 have told me this is not what they needed to keep their business open. They desperately needed support from the state in the form of unemployment insurance relief. They said they needed help with fast, reliable testing and PPE to cover their business and employees. They said they needed access to grants and loans to help them get by. Cocktails-to-go was not the answer to them financially, especially when third party delivery charges continue to eat into their profits with every delivery made.

We must consider with each of these bills that we pass, the full impact that more access to alcohol can bring to the issue of substance use disorder in a state that has a poor record on dealing with it now. Oregonians need help now and our economy will be better for it too.

Sincerely,

Janeen Sollman
State Representative-House District 30

