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Testimony Supporting SB 38 – Banning AWOL Devices
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Background: A dangerous trend is making its way into Missouri bars, clubs and the hands of our youth. Alcohol With Out Liquid (AWOL) devices are machines that mix distilled spirits with pure oxygen. A cloudy alcohol vapor is created that can be inhaled or snorted. See the attached.

What makes AWOL devices so dangerous? When alcohol (ex. vodka, scotch, gin) is mixed with oxygen and the vapor is inhaled, the stomach and liver are bypassed prohibiting the organs from filtering out toxins. The alcohol vapor is absorbed through the blood vessels creating a quicker high and more intense effect on the brain. Experts have claimed that the practice of inhaling alcohol vapor could be linked to brain damage, like underage alcohol use has been proven to do.

AWOL devices have been banned in parts of Great Britain, Australia and the United States. Many counties and municipalities in the United States have moved quickly to ban the devices as part of a proactive measure to reduce underage and high risk drinking. The following states have already banned AWOL devices: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wyoming.

AWOL devices are an alternative alcohol delivery system targeting young people who drink to get drunk. These devices are gimmicks and effective tools in promoting high risk drinking. They have no purpose among adults who drink responsibly. AWOL devices are marketed to our youth by using alluring stories about the device, including how safe it is. *There is no "safe" alcohol use by youth.*

Underage youth are at risk.

- Alcohol is the number one drug used by Missouri pre-teens and teens; The average age of first use in Missouri is 12. (*2004 Missouri Student Survey: Department of Mental Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse*)
- 50% of Missouri 11th and 12th graders reported using alcohol in the past 30 days. (*2004 Missouri Student Survey: Department of Mental Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse*)
- 31% of U.S. college students had been classified with an alcohol abuse diagnosis and 6% for a dependence diagnosis in the last 12 months. (*Source: Alcohol Abuse and Dependence among US College students May 2002*).
- Underage alcohol use costs Missourians \$1.3 billion a year or \$2244 per each youth. (*Journal of Studies on Alcohol, 2006*)