

April 25, 1979

LB 221

to work much better at twenty one than it is working at nineteen so I urge you not to vote for the kill motion.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Fowler and then Senator DeCamp.

SENATOR FOWLER: In the debate on the kill motion I have heard at least three identifiable theories as to what should be done to try and deal with the problem of junior high and high school drinking. Senator Murphy says that if the Mrs. Murphys of America stayed home we might not have this problem. Senator Chambers said that perhaps if we had a more rigid totalitarian system we would not have this problem and Senator Kelly says that if we did not allow nineteen and twenty year olds to buy alcohol we would not have this problem. I would suggest that each is statistically documentable, that in the past seven years many many Mrs. Murphys have gone out to work and if Senator Kelly's statistics are right many many teenagers started drinking and I think that statistics, if I can believe what Senator Chambers says about Cuba, would indicate that they may have less of a teenage drinking problem than the United States, and Senator Kelly is maintaining that because we lowered the drinking age, junior high and high school drinking started. Well you can do those sorts of things with statistics and I would say that each theory has equal validity and, in fact, each theory is not very logical. When I was in high school the drinking age was twenty-one and there were students in high school who drank and students in high school who knew how to get alcohol into high schools and junior highs and I have talked to people in alcoholism counselling and they have said that a number of the alcoholics that they work with first started drinking as teenagers during prohibition and that at that time when alcohol was banned supposedly across the country, as teenagers they were able to get alcohol. Now I don't think that there is a lot of logic in the idea of raising the drinking age but it certainly provides a convenience scapegoat to blame nineteen and twenty year olds for junior high and high school drinking. Now in this Legislature in the seven years I have been here I have seen numerous bills introduced on alcohol and almost all of these bills make it easier to sell alcohol, make alcohol more available, lessen the restrictions, for example, prohibitions on advertising. This Legislature removed very handily several years back but since the drinking age was raised. These are all bills since the drinking age was raised so now major newspaper ads are there advertising the latest alcohol specials. We have created new categories of liquor licenses so that