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FLOOR DEBATE

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poor areas are. After doing everything to undermine the stability of these communities, to put strains on the families that are trying to survive and maintain some integrity, every type of activity which would undermine those efforts are placed in those locations. Then the ones who do the placing and profit financially are the very ones to point the finger and say, oh, it's not safe to go there. You find drunk people on the street and all the other things, many of which are stereotypical and untrue but are readily accepted as gospel. The liquor industry is the most highly regulated industry in this country, at least in this state, and it ought to be. Liquor is recognized as a drug. It's recognized as a drug whose use leads to more accidents, deaths, domestic violence, failures in individual lives, the dragging down of communities than any other drug, legal or illegal. I would like those people who are so "solicitudinous" toward the welfare, if you want to call it that, of the purveyors of alcohol to ask themselves why these people don't want to open an establishment in their own neighborhood. These establishments, by and large, are owned by people who don't live in the community where those establishments are and would not want the number that they are contributing to in these other vulnerable areas to spring up where they live. So all I can do is what is available for me in this Legislature to try to persuade my colleagues to do that which is decent, proper, and in order. Nobody can say alcohol is not readily enough available in any city in this state. But it is easy for people...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...who live in these communities and deal with the problems of excessive numbers of liquor outlets to point out that too much liquor is available and it is too readily available. The enactment of this law is not going to take away anybody's license. What it will do is give a regulatory commission the discretion to exercise judgment which any regulatory commission should have. And if you withhold from it the right to consider what can be shown as the greatest problem to date, then the commission may as well go out of business as far as I'm concerned. Because if my community is not helped, what do I care about these others? Let them become