

Project Extra Mile urges board of regents to rethink alcohol at Nebraska athletic events

Written by Ashly Richardson

OMAHA, Neb. (WOWT) - On Friday, the University of Nebraska could be one step closer to having alcohol at games and events on its campuses, but one organization is mounting an effort to stop that.

"It's a very big deal, and it's going to open up a can of worms and a lot of problems," said Chris Wagner, Project Extra Mile executive director.

The Board of Regents is slated to vote on whether to reverse its ban on alcohol sales at university athletic events. It wouldn't automatically mean alcohol would be sold at those events, but would be a step in that direction.

Project Extra Mile says alcohol could have unintended consequences.

"The research says that there are over 1,500 alcohol-related unintentional deaths that occur every year among college-aged students. Nearly 700,000 assaults and it's also reported that approximately 1 in 5 sexual assaults involves alcohol as well," said Wagner.

Pinnacle Bank Arena already allows alcohol sales during certain events throughout the year. The general manager there said he's excited about the potential opportunity and that the venue can handle it if the Huskers move in that direction.

"Since we do have a wide variety of events, a lot of them do have alcohol sales. We feel comfortable that the way that we'll be able to do it and pricing and control will make it safe not only for the customers but also the neighborhood."

Under the proposed change, the university president and chancellors would be able to authorize the sale of alcohol at athletic events on their respective campuses.

But Project Extra Mile leaders say fans don't need the drinks in order to have fun.

"The truth is we've had almost, approaching 400 consecutive sellouts so we are not risking losing our fans in Lincoln," Wagner said.

Alcohol sales may be tested out during the Big Ten wrestling championship at Pinnacle Bank Arena in March. Regents are scheduled to vote on that Friday as well.

Project Extra Mile is asking anyone with concerns about the proposal to show up to the meeting Friday or to email the board.