

Mark's Country Wine and Liquors
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Mark A. Kentfield, Permittee

Good afternoon distinguished members of the Legislative Program Review And Investigations Committee, my name is Mark Kentfield and I am owner of Mark's Country Wine and Liquors in Ellington, CT. I am writing to you today to voice my opposition to SB 204 An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Program Review and investigations Committee Concerning the Sale of Alcoholic Liquor on Sunday.

As the owner of a small package store opening on a Sunday would put a financial burden on my business during these already trying economic times. The overhead we would have to pay for includes extra electricity to run lights, heat and air conditioners depending on the season; employees or work 7 days per week; and other tasks that need to be done on a day-to-day basis. I already work 6 days a week, which takes me away from time with my family. I realize the language in this bill makes it optional for stores to open on a Sunday, however if all the stores in my town are open, then I would be doing a disservice to my customers by remaining closed. If even a few of my customers stop shopping at my store because I am not open on Sundays, I would not be able to keep my business going.

I would also like to provide you with information regarding of my experience with staying open until 9:00 for a trial period of 8 months. During that extra hour, I did not generate any extra business. Many of my customers during that hour were people rushing in at 8:45, right before closing were the same people that would rush in at 7:45 on a regular night. I decided it wasn't financially feasible for me to stay open until 9:00. I spoke to the other liquor store owners in my town and all of us agreed to close at 8:00 except for one. It is of my opinion that Sunday sales would bring the same experience as late openings. Sales would carry over 7 days rather than 6 days and I don't think you would see a huge increase in revenue for the state as projected. The residents of Connecticut have been following the same laws for many years and they know the days and times of the week liquor can be being sold. I don't foresee a large generation of business for those rare occasions where they didn't plan ahead and go out of state to purchase. Many times people go out of state to purchase alcohol because it is less expensive due to taxes.

There is no stimulus or bail out money for a small businesses, especially someone in the so called "sin" business of selling alcohol and tobacco. This business is my livelihood, it is what my family depends upon to survive.

Thank you for taking my testimony into consideration. I am sorry that I cannot appear before you in person as I was unable to find someone to cover my store so I could take the afternoon off to testify.