



317 Highland Street • Manchester, CT 06040
Telephone: (860) 646-4277

Testimony of Tim Devanney, President Highland Park Markets

**In support of SB204: An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the
Program Review and Investigations Committee Concerning the Sale of
Alcoholic Beverages on Sunday**

Before the Program Review & Investigations Committee

March 8, 2010

Good Afternoon Chairman Kissel, Chairman Mushinsky, and members of the Program Review and Investigations Committee. My name is Tim Devanney. I am the President of Highland Park Markets. Our business dates back to 1886 in Highland Park, a section of Manchester. Since then, we have grown to 6 stores circling the Hartford area. I am here today to talk in support of SB204.

Much of what we are at Highland Park Market today is in response to what our customers have requested. We carry groceries out to our customers' cars. We still have butchers that cut meats to order. Our delis are full service, slicing to order. We even have chefs that cook in store rather than thawing products to serve in our delis. We also have pastry chefs in our bakeries. All these services have been instituted in direct response to our customers' needs and wants.

Over the years we have also evolved, ever changing our hours of operation to fit changing schedules of our customers. Years ago, we used to close at 6:00PM, however, everyone who worked at Pratt & Whitney couldn't reach our location until then and we began closing at 6:30 for our customers. With changing times, Mom and Dad both working, and working later, we were eventually forced to stay open until 9:00PM. Our industry has many people that are even open 24 hours. Whereas shopping used to be done during the week, Saturday and Sunday have now become major shopping days, ranking 1 and 2 depending on the forecast. With Sunday being one of our busiest days of the week, our customers can't figure out why they can't buy beer on Sundays. I can't really give them an answer. Protecting Mom and Pop stores rather than helping our customers with

convenient services is not what we have worked so hard to become over the years.

Since our doors opened in 1886 we have fought to service our customers as best we can. I can understand in 1886 not opening on Sunday or restricting sales on some items. After all, Moms stayed home and cooked, Dad went to work either on the farm or in the mill or at small retail stores like Highland Park Market. Sundays were a day for families to go to Church and spend the day together, a tradition that, we as family, continue to try to observe. Sunday evenings at the Devaney Home, we feed between 18 to 25 people. A couple of months ago we went to Boston to visit our daughter. Heading back on Sunday afternoon on the MassPike, we came to the realization we had no wine and very soon after we would arrive home, everyone would be showing up for dinner. As we stopped in Sturbridge, we were amazed at how many CT license plates we saw. I can't understand why we are forcing our customers out of state every weekend. I truly believe the old days of not selling liquor or beer on Sundays is a slap in the face to our customers. I know the reluctance is based on protecting Mom & Pops but, I for one, hate to send my customers out of the state on Sunday to purchase something on my shelves and, from what I understand, we will pick up 7.5 to 8 million dollars for the state.

If package stores don't want to open, that's fine. I know better than anyone the struggle of battling it out with the big guys but that's my choice. Why wouldn't we let competition rather than protectionism work? We are constantly fighting larger corporations and compete by being better and servicing our customers better. We do not rely on the state to protect us. Please consider that I don't need antiquated laws to tell me things like when to open and when to close. I'll listen to my customers.