

**CONNECTICUT
COALITION
TO
STOP
UNDERAGE
DRINKING**

30 Arbor Street, Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 523-8042
1-800-422-5422
Fax # (860) 236-9412



We are writing to you concerning the proposal advanced by a few in the General Assembly to allow Sunday off premise sales at package and grocery stores.

It appears to us that the issue is taking a turn for the worst. It has been reasonably accepted by almost everyone over the years that there is very little money to be generated by the state for opening a 7th day. The proof of that seems to be demonstrated by the \$ 2 million that was reported to be generated by the one extra hour per day (8 to 9 PM) in the 2003 budget. That amount did not materialize.

The issue now appears to be one of let's encourage more purchasing and more drinking by the extra day. Buy more drink more has devastating consequences for the state. It falls in line with the 24 hour proposal for casinos or other similar practices. The casino proposed rule was probably safer than a Sunday off premise sales day. At least, a permittee monitors drinking at a bar. Package and grocery stores have no such control. The only control is the age and the apparent sobriety of the purchase.

The consumption of alcohol on another day on a weekend targets a very specific market by the manufactures.

- Problem drinkers who buy every day.
- Underage drinkers who have more opportunity to drink on weekends when studies show they tend to consume the most.

The liquor manufacturers who push more sales opportunities don't tell you what happened in New Mexico. In what is one of the few studies ever conducted by a group, The American Medical Society, studied traffic accidents, deaths and injuries over a 10 year period. The study of the five years before Sunday sales were allowed and then five years since Sunday off premise sales were allowed.

The statistics show an increase in automobile accidents of 41% on Sunday after Sunday sales were allowed.

We oppose Sunday off premise sales. Before you go for a buy more drink more mantra you should also consider the cost of more alcohol consumption to public safety and the many indirect costs to the state budget. Look at the effects of alcohol in the Department of Social Services and the Department of Mental Health and Addition Services. They took alcohol out of the title of the agency that handled alcohol problems which was a few years ago, requested by the alcohol manufacturers, but the increasing costs of more alcohol availability and consumption cannot be denied.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Craig Turner, Vice-Chairman

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