



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

**REPRESENTATIVE KATHLEEN M. TALLARITA**  
FIFTY EIGHTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
ROOM 5004  
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591  
HOME: (860) 741-6759  
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8585  
FAX: (860) 240-0206  
E-mail: Kathy.Tallarita@cga.ct.gov

**MAJORITY CAUCUS CHAIR**

**RANKING MEMBER**  
INTERNSHIP COMMITTEE

**MEMBER**  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGING  
FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE

March 8, 2010

Good Afternoon Representative Mushinsky, Senator Kissel, distinguished colleagues and members of the Program Review and Investigation Committee.

I thank you for raising **SB 204: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE SALE OF ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR ON SUNDAY.**

Connecticut is in the midst of one of the worst economic recessions in its history, and we need to consider *all available options* to save critical government programs. These options must include legalizing Sunday alcohol beverage sales, which studies show would be beneficial to our state.

By allowing Sunday sales, Connecticut stands to gain up to \$8 million annually in additional sales and excise tax revenues, without raising or implementing any new taxes. This has been confirmed in a 72-page report on economic competitiveness that was released on December 17, 2009 by this Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee. The report also states that per-capita sales in the border towns were 35 to 43 percent lower than in other Connecticut towns between 2004 and 2008 since Connecticut now remains the only New England state with a Sunday sales ban.

An \$8 million annual gain of sales and excise tax revenues would allow many critical government programs to avoid having their funding reduced during these hard economic times. Funding could be saved for programs like the Child Lead Poisoning Account (which may lose \$220,000), the Brain Injury Association and similar programs (which may lose \$932,000), and for Community Health Centers (which may lose \$1,746,000).

The proof is also in the 12 states which have recently enacted Sunday sales laws. Colorado, the most recent state to do so, saw its alcohol excise tax revenue collection

increase by six percent over the previous year despite the toll of the recent recession. Furthermore, these states did not experience an increase in drunk driving or underage drinking.

Legalizing Sunday sales is a move that Connecticut's citizens favor in overwhelming numbers. Poll after poll has shown strong support for this change, and many thousands of Connecticut residents have taken the time to send e-mails and postcards to legislators and the Governor's office.

Opponents of Sunday sales have said that consumers will continue to go out of state to purchase their alcohol beverage products, and that \$8 million annually in additional sales and excise tax revenues wouldn't be possible. They also state that jobs would be lost.

Opponents of Sunday sales claims are inaccurate and are out-of-touch with Connecticut residents and business owners. Just ask a small business owner in a border town near Rhode Island, Massachusetts or New York who loses business to package stores, grocery stores, gas stations and restaurants when Connecticut residents run errands on a Sunday. The Connecticut license plates in border state package store parking lots on Sunday mean revenue lost for critical government programs. I welcome any of you to join me on any given Sunday and witness the Connecticut license plates crossing the border into Massachusetts and see *our tax revenue* on beer, wine, spirits, groceries, gasoline and many other products stay in Massachusetts' general fund.

Connecticut is only one of three states and the only of the entire Northeast states that has refused to take up this issue and that still prohibits the purchase of beverage alcohol on Sunday. This depression-era law should go and now is the time. The state legislature and the governor must seize the opportunity to keep these dollars here in Connecticut where they are urgently needed. The time is now to legalize Sunday alcohol beverage sales and allow Liquor Stores in Connecticut the "*option*" to open for business on Sundays.

Thank you again for your time and for hearing **SB 204: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE CONCERNING THE SALE OF ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR ON SUNDAY.**

I hope you will move this bill out of committee and Connecticut into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.