



NEW HAVEN
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE SERVICE
One Union Avenue • New Haven • Connecticut • 06519



Frank Limon
Chief of Police

John DeStefano Jr
Mayor

Good Afternoon Members of the General Law Committee,

I am representing the City of New Haven Police Department, and come before the committee today to support Senate Bill 458, and House Bill 5739, which would amend section 30-39 of the Connecticut General Statutes, requiring the Chief Municipal Public Safety Official to approve all new and renewed liquor permits, in order to protect the community and the neighborhoods surrounding liquor establishments.

Under current law, the fire marshal, and other city departments, such as the zoning, and health departments have to sign off on applications for new and renewed liquor permits. There are limited avenues for input from the local police department regarding a liquor permit, which might include evidence of chronic illegal activity at a liquor establishment. The municipal police departments are the ones responding to and investigating problems at these establishments, and may have the most knowledge of activities occurring at such establishments.

There are problems at some liquor establishments in New Haven ranging from chronic drug dealing to violence, up to and including homicide. The police department has spent considerable resources investigating activity at some of these establishments, yet when the establishment applies for a liquor permit renewal, the police department is often in the dark. The Police Department is often surprised and concerned when a liquor establishment opens.

Once considerable effort has been made to close a problem establishment, and the Liquor Commission decides to revoke or not renew a permit, it is the position of the New Haven Police Department that the Chief of Police should have to sign off on a liquor permit for another liquor establishment at the same location. It has been our experience that a close relative of the previous owner will often get approval for a new liquor permit at the same location, and that the same management will continue to run essentially the same business under a new name. This describes how problem locations continue to stay in business year after year and nothing changes at the location except for the name on the sign.

It is the view of the New Haven Police Department that this change would not represent a significant burden to the many liquor establishments which follow the law, and report criminal activity in and around their establishments. We feel that the benefit to public safety outweighs the time that each establishment would spend on this proposed requirement.

We look forward to this partnership with the state that will have a positive impact on public safety.

Thank you for your time.