



New England Convenience Store
A s s o c i a t i o n

Connecticut Chapter

Testimony Submitted By:

Cathy Barber, Board Member- NECSA , Chair of NECSA-CT Legislative Committee and
CT Sales Manager, L.E. Belcher, Inc.

General Law Committee

February 28, 2012

Good afternoon. I'm Cathy Barber of Wethersfield, Chair of the CT Legislative Committee for NECSA, the New England Convenience Store Association. We represent hundreds of CT convenience stores, c-stores. Please note: 80% of c-stores are owned by single store operators; they are small family owned businesses, the epitome of small business, the backbone of our economy.

We are small businesses willingly open long hours, 7 days per week. We WANT to be open, & we WANT to do more business, & we WANT to add jobs. We want to do a better job serving customers and we're asking to sell beer, a typical convenience store item in almost all other States.

Because of CT's antiquated Blue Laws, most CT c-store operators have been precluded from selling beer, limiting business opportunity & consumer options. In 1978, when I applied to become a c-store franchisee in Utica, NY, I was first required to obtain a beer license. Beer is a regular item in most convenience stores, except in CT. I lived in MA & NY before moving to CT & was quite surprised to learn of restrictive laws here.

CT ranks #49 out of 50 States in per capita sales of beer. I suspect we drink as much beer in CT as anywhere else, we just don't buy it in CT. It's not convenient to find, available hours are strictly limited, and at times, it's not competitively priced. Out-of-State retailers do a great job of serving CT residents, a well-known fact ignored at great peril to our tax revenue.



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There is room for growth in the beer industry in CT. Taking our rightful sales and tax revenue back from even a single State, like Massachusetts, will yield positive results for CT.

We support the comprehensive approach that Bill 5021 proposes. The biggest winner will be CT consumers who will benefit from greater competition within CT and with neighboring states which will mean lower prices and better choices. We believe package stores should be able to sell the products we currently sell such as, snacks, chips, cheese and crackers, normal package store items in other States. It's in the best interest of the customer.

In our business, independent owners like "Joe's Convenience Store" compete against giant wholesale clubs and large grocery chains selling all the other items sold in convenience stores.

There are hundreds of CT convenience store owners and employees here to support this bill and they ask for your support of our industry and most importantly our customers. Please pass Bill #5021. Thank you.

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Cathy Barber, Feb 28, 2012