**Statement of The Stop & Shop Supermarket Company**

**Testimony before the General Law Committee**

**Mark McGowan, President, Stop & Shop New England Division**
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**In support of 5021: An Act Concerning Competitive Alcoholic Liquor Pricing and Hours of operation For Permittees**

**February 28, 2011**

The Stop & Shop Supermarket Company is one of the largest employers in the state of Connecticut with more than 14,700 full and part-time union associates. We operate 94 stores in Connecticut.

On behalf of The Stop & Shop Supermarket Company, We ask for your support for HB5021 "An Act Concerning Competitive Alcoholic Liquor Pricing and Hours of Operation for Permittees". It is time to reform our state's antiquated alcohol blue laws.

The proposal would repeal the ban on Sunday sale of beer, wine, spirits at retail grocery and package stores. The measure will also allow the option to be open on "Monday after Sunday" holidays like Memorial Day, July 4th and Labor Day. The proposal would create a medallion statewide system that would allow retailers to purchase package stores licenses. The bill also repeals the blue law as it relates to minimum pricing rules, which sets an artificial floor for the price of beer, wine and spirits. We strongly believe that this proposal is pro consumer and it will increase competition, and revenue for the state.

Consumers

Connecticut is the only state in the Northeast that still prohibits the Sunday sale of alcoholic beverages at retail establishments. Sunday is one of our busiest shopping days, because it affords families the time and the opportunity to prepare for their busy upcoming week. Our customers are time starved and are looking for everyday convenience. We strive to ensure that we offer customers a true convenient, one-stop shopping experience. Changing the Sunday Blue law will enable our customers to complete their Sunday shopping trip – ensuring they can purchase all food, beverages, health and beauty care needs and other household necessities in a single shopping trip. Connecticut consumers will benefit greatly from the repeal of this blue law. Consumers would like the option to be able to purchase alcohol on "Monday after Sunday" holidays like Memorial Day, July 4th and Labor Day as well. It is all about convenience. Reforming the minimum pricing rules would be a win for consumers, there would be more competition, prohibit artificial price controls and resulting in lower prices for those products for the Connecticut consumer.

Training

We have been selling beer to our customers in Connecticut six days a week for many years now. We take our responsibility concerning the sale of beer very seriously. We train our associates in handling the transaction of alcohol sales and safeguards are in place to prompt our cashiers to request identification in connection with alcohol sales.

Economics

We are open seven days a week, yet we are not allowed to sell alcohol on Sundays. This means loss of retail sales and revenue for the state. We have Connecticut store locations that border New York, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, states that allow the sale of alcohol on Sundays.

Repeal of antiquated alcohol Blue laws will allow our Stop & Shop stores located near the borders to compete on an even playing field for sales seven days a week. By eliminating the ban it will mean increased sales, create new sales tax revenue, new excise tax revenue, and additional unclaimed deposit escheat revenue for the state. As we all know, we need revenue to help close our state's budget deficit in future years and to spare important social programs from deep budget cuts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we strongly urge the committee to support HB5021 to repeal the antiquated Sunday Blue law ban on the Sunday sale of alcoholic beverages, support reform on the minimum pricing laws and the creation of the medallion license system. This will provide conveniences to consumers, increasing retail sales, help improve Connecticut's economy, create new jobs, increasing competition and raise additional state revenue.

Thank you.