Proposed Liquor Legislation – Bill #5021 **Opposed**

To: General Law Committee Members

From: Maureen Abrahamson (Owner) & Mark Abrahamson (Owner)

Mo's Wine & Spirits
953 Post Road
Fairfield, CT 06824

Wilton Wine Shoppe
203 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT

Date: 2/28/12

I would like to thank the esteemed members of the General Law Commission for the opportunity to express my feelings here today before you.

My Father raised me to believe that I could be whatever I wanted to be in life.....because I was a hard working American. I have been employed continuously since I was 11 years old, put myself through undergraduate and graduate school, and worked my way up the corporate ladder eventually becoming one of the only women VP's at a bank in NYC. Opted out of the corporate world and over the past 14 years launched three successful businesses. Married the man of my dreams, raising an amazing 11 year old girl, own my own home and give back to my community – town commissioner, environmental and PTA committees, two local underage task forces, Chamber of Commerce, brownie leader....life is full.

We own Mo's Wine & Spirits in Fairfield, mid-large store and Wilton Wine Shoppe a small store in Wilton. Together we employ 15-20 employees- 6 full time. While my idea of the American dream was not necessarily to own a liquor store, my MBA and my husband's background, palate and passion have combined perfectly to create our well-run, respected establishments.

While we always knew the day would come that we had to be open on Sundays, we never in our wildest dreams could imagine our entire industry could be sacrificed at the alter of big money and lobbyists for grocery store chains and big box stores. While it is being fed to the public as overturning Blue Laws, this bill goes so much deeper as you have no doubt determined by other testimony. **We would like to state for the record that if our legislators feel that Sunday sales will generate needed revenue for our great state, they should approve this portion of the bill. We will support you.**

I, like a lot of owners across the state, kept hoping that I could just close my eyes and forget about this bill. It just seemed incomprehensible that a bill of this complexity and

magnitude could be dropped on our doorstep with no time to rally 1200 disparate package stores to fight for their liveihoods. But, it seems this whole thing was rolled out with razor vision. Pick off the beer guys then work on the wholesalers who have had enormous pressure to concede. Add a ton of money and shake up an entire state.

And, it has worked...our ranks are scared and angry. We've heard the rumors about the behind the scenes machinations and arm twisting. Is this politics as usual? I hope not because we are people with families and lives. Why are we left behind?

But, what about us, the retailers, the ones appointed with the responsibility to sell alcohol to the masses, the ones who bought into the current system, that were left out of the equation. We invested our sweat and financial equity in a system that is being dismantled by Big Box and grocery store chains. I wake up at night and try to figure out why.

Our local legislators have expressed their full support and I can't tell you how grateful we all are for that so I am here to offer a solution:

Slow this bill down, dissect its contents, and demand an economic impact study to determine how this will affect our industry and the state coffers. Convene a bi-partisan, industry-wide panel be to study ways to accomplish this in a transparent, inclusive manner.

As final note, I pay my taxes to the State of CT and United States of America. I am incorporated in the state of CT not out of the state or the country. Our CEO's live right here in Fairfield. It's me! The MBA who still believes in the American dream, and the intelligence of our political system to slow down ill-conceived bills and safeguard small business while doing what is appropriate for our state.