

# Proposed Liquor Legislation

# Bill #5021 **Opposed**

To: General Law Committee Members

2/28/2012

From: Patrick Monteleone (Owner)  
Harry's Wine and Liquor Market  
2094 Post Road  
Fairfield, Ct. 06824

Dear Sir/Madam,

Attached Please find a copy of my testimony presented at the hearing for FB #5021. In the testimony you will find arguments against the implementation of what is being unfairly touted as **"The Sunday sales"** bill. The evidence presented will show that this is in fact a sweeping, multi layered reform to a system that is working and has served our state and the Connecticut small business man well for many decades.

**The points addressed within this are as follows:**

- **Fairness to the small business owner**
- **Loss of jobs and putting at risk 1200 local businesses**
- **A Bill designed to benefit big box and chain stores only**
- **Consumption by minors of a controlled substance**
- **Sending revenue out of state rather into our local economy**
- **Depletion of selection and higher prices to the consumer**

Thank you for your consideration,

Patrick Monteleone

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From: Patrick Monteleone (Owner)  
Harry's Wine and Liquor Market  
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Dear Sir/Madam,

I recently purchased Harry's Wine & Liquor Market, a business located on the Post Road in Fairfield Connecticut for more than 70 years. One of my partners, Scott Pollack, is the Original owner's grandson and represents the third generation of ownership of this store. The other is William Miller, who like myself, is a long-time employee. Over the years, our small business has employed hundreds of local residents, many who have gone on to careers in the beverage and restaurant industries as a result of the training that we provided. Further, we take great pride in our dedication to the community, in our track record as a gatekeeper for the distribution of a controlled substance and as a business that is known for offering great service and selection for its customer base. I am speaking to you today because our business, and many others similar to ours, is at risk due to Governor Malloy's proposed changes to the Connecticut Liquor Laws.

When we purchased the store on November 1, 2011 just a few months ago, we did it understanding the laws and regulations governing our industry. I believe that it is reasonable to expect that laws which have gone largely unchanged since the end of prohibition would remain similar over time, changing only to fit the needs of an evolving time in our society. The bill being touted as "Sunday sales" is in fact a multi-layered reform to fix an industry that simply isn't broken. In a time where it seems that our state and country have finally moved back toward a farm to table mentality, where the small business man and his uniqueness are appreciated, it is inconceivable to me that we would put a working system that has so many thriving small businesses at risk.

These proposals represent a sweeping change that is a nod to the Big box and Chain stores that all too often put small family owned shops out of business. The changes that are being proposed are not at all consistent with the way our industry has operated successfully for many decades. The increase in the number of licenses per owner, quantity discounting, discontinuation of minimum bottle

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price and Sunday sales are all proposals that will benefit the big chains and supermarkets at the expense of the smaller stores. Once the big stores are granted this amount of purchasing power, it is a fact that they will put the small stores out of business. This will result in lost jobs, less selection and once the competition has been eliminated...increased prices. Chain stores and supermarkets are motivated by profit only. They do not have a stake in the local community like the small stores. They will not offer the service that we do. They will not be as diligent in protecting minors as we are. They will not give back to the community the way we do. They will employ a fraction of the people that we do and those people will not have anywhere near the product knowledge that we have.

This proposal puts 1,200 retail wine and liquor stores at risk of going out of business. Thousands of taxpaying employees will likely be laid off. Product selection will be greatly diminished. Protections against consumption by minors will be threatened...all for what benefit? To keep a handful of consumers who live in border towns from crossing state lines to purchase alcohol? Is this benefit really worth the potential cost?

Our system is certainly not perfect and I for one am perfectly willing to engage in a discussion with lawmakers, wholesalers and other retailers about potential improvements. But instead, with no input whatsoever, we are faced with these wholesale changes to our industry which have been advocated by a handful of deep-pocketed companies that will greatly benefit from them. We have not been provided any quantifiable evidence that the benefits of the proposal would outweigh the costs or, for that matter, that there are in fact any benefits at all.

I urge you to vote NO to the proposal.

Thank you for your consideration,

Patrick Monteleone