



State of Connecticut

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Testimony
In Opposition of H.B. 5021
General Law Committee
February 28, 2012

Good morning Chairmen Doyle and Taborsak, Ranking members Witkos and Rebimbas.

I am Senator Scott Frantz from the 36th district, and I am testifying today in opposition to **HB 5021, An Act Concerning Competitive Alcoholic Liquor Pricing and Hours of Operation for Permittees**. Over the years and more recently, I have spoken extensively with small package store owner's both inside and outside of my district to hear their concerns about this bill and others that have come before it. After lengthy discussions concerning HB 5201, I would like to focus on three potentially devastating provisions to the package store industry in this bill, which are:

- The elimination of minimum bottle law
- Allowing retailers to own as many as 9 package stores (up from 2).
- Sunday sales and extended retail hours

On the issues of eliminating the minimum per bottle price policy and allowing owners to obtain up to nine licenses to operate stores anywhere in the state, the clear consensus is that larger stores would undoubtedly drive most, if not ultimately all, the smaller package and wine stores out of business. As quintessential small businesses, many of these stores are family owned, have operated in Connecticut for decades and employ thousands of people, all of whose jobs would become at risk with far fewer potential employees replacing them. Now more than ever the state of Connecticut needs to be "open for business" and not passing legislation that will hurt small businesses and ultimately create job losses in our state.

As a legislature, we must look at both the costs and benefits of bills we usher through the legislative process. In addition to potentially causing the loss of a great many jobs, the social costs and real life law enforcement costs of extending liquor sales on Sunday, extended serving hours in bars certainly outweigh the "possible" revenue boost projected by the passage of this bill. Most recently, the city of Springfield Massachusetts proposed to rescind their serving of alcohol in bars from 2 a.m. to 1 a.m. as an attempt cut down on the alcohol related incidents of violence in their city. It seems we are moving in the opposite direction, and in doing so, we may cause more harm than the remarkably small incremental revenues are worth.

Many thanks for your time and consideration of my testimony.

Sincerely,

L. Scott Frantz, State Senator 36th District