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I want to start by thanking Senator Doyle and Representative Taborsak and the other members of the General Law Committee for this opportunity to testify about Raised Bill 5021.

My name is Shelby Rafaniello Pons. I am testifying as a citizen of Bristol Connecticut, a parent of three children and a Master in Social Work Policy Student at the University of Connecticut. As a future Social Worker of Policy Practice, I am testifying to support Raised Bill 5021, An Act Concerning Competitive Alcoholic Liquor Pricing and Hours of Operation for Permittees. This Bill attempts to eliminate an old Blue Law that prohibits the sale of liquor on Sunday, affording Connecticut the opportunity to bring in approximately an additional 8.5 million dollars of revenue per year.

As a student of social work, I can see the multiple advantages that 8.5 million dollars could provide to the children and families of Connecticut. In a time when resources are continuously being cut, it would be encouraging to see Connecticut attempt to address the vulnerable budget with sensible solutions. Solutions that involve providing additional job opportunities for the working class and that do not involve raising taxes.

More than \$3.2 million dollars was recently rescinded from the Education budget; these cuts effected services to our most vulnerable families. They included cuts to many local programs which include, but are not limited to: Family Resource Centers, After School Programs, Young Parents Programs, Even Start, and Primary Mental Health programs. \$8.5 million dollars would not only restore the rescinded amount, but provide additional funding to support services that would support other vulnerable populations.

An additional benefit to Raised Bill 5021 would be more convenience to Connecticut Consumers. Outdated regulations prevent consumers from the convenience of purchasing liquor on Sundays. Sunday is the busiest shopping day of the week. Ending the Sunday sales ban will mean more choice and convenience for Connecticut consumers.

As progressive as I believed CT to be, I was amazed to learn that CT is the only state in New England and one of only two states in the entire country that still prohibits the sale of beer wine and spirits at neighborhood grocery and package stores.

Connecticut's neighborhood grocery and package stores are losing business to stores in bordering states who allow Sunday sales and longer hours of operation. According to one industry estimate, Connecticut is losing \$570 million in sales to bordering states

It is time for Connecticut to get rid of an antiquated blue law designed to enforce religious standards. As the Hartford Courant posed, "Isn't it time that the land of steady habits caught up with the rest of the country".

I strongly encourage this committee to support Raised Bill 5021 and to respect the voices of CT consumers, ensure CT's competitive position, and add millions of dollars in additional revenue.