

It's not actually about Sunday Sales!

Oppose
#5021

We are all here to address Governor Malloy's proposal to change the existing liquor laws in Connecticut. The only thing most people know about this bill is that it will allow the sale of alcohol on Sundays and Holidays. **But, beware to all consumers – it's not that simple.**

CT now has the highest number of liquor stores per capita in the country. This fact alone ensures competitive prices, as well as numerous choices. The bill includes changes that will surely lead to the demise of most of Connecticut's 1200 or so small to medium package stores. In a time when small businesses are being idealized as the backbone of our country's economy, this bill will *eliminate* the "mom & pop" liquor stores within the first year and at least 50% of the slightly larger stores, who support their families and usually several employees, will be gone within 2 years. I am one of those employees.

The effect this bill will have on CT stores will be devastating. Malloy projects an increase in revenue with expanded store hours, but he never addresses the projected number who will join the unemployed. He also speaks loudly about lowering consumer prices, but should liquor really be the product we should be making cheaper for consumers?

Two of the major issues in the bill that hurt small business: 1) Increasing the number of liquor permits an owner may have from 2 to 9 and 2) Eliminating the current laws making it illegal for a store owner to negotiate prices or get free goods for bulk purchases. In other words, big or small, under the current price structure, all stores pay the same amount for every case of wine, liquor or beer. It's a level playing field. The proposed changes open the doors to big-box retailers and major super-market chains and you can predict the outcome. Large retailers will buy 1000's of cases at a discount and be able to sell wines etc. for less than what a small store will pay for them.

Initially, this may seem beneficial for the consumer, but let's think further down the road. Within a few years, there will be no small package stores. No knowledgeable wine help, no deliveries, no assistance with party planning, and fewer choices. Then, once the large stores are the only game in town, the prices will go back up. Do you want to trust the Wal-Mart model of retail for everything? Do you want an eighteen year old to help with your next fine wine purchase? Would you enjoy living in a community where your choices were reduced to whatever a few large retailers decide to sell?

CT package store owners have obeyed the existing liquor laws for decades. They have served their communities, paid their taxes, hired employees, and managed the responsibility for the sale of alcohol. We help our neighborhoods with school auctions and charity events. The guise under which this bill is being pushed through the legislature comes at the expense of the small business owner. Perhaps the CT laws should be modernized. But this bill is reckless. I invite you to talk to you local package store owner about what it will do to his or her future.

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shop