

Testimony In Support of Bill No 5021  
Barbara Koren  
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I am Barbara Koren. I was born and raised in Connecticut. For the past 22 years I have lived in Barkhamsted.

I am retail professional that 25 years ago entered the convenience store industry and literally fell in love. I currently work for Mercury Fuel, a family run business founded in 1947 in Waterbury. We have three generations of Devino family members actively involved in the day-to-day operations of running Mercury Fuel. We are an example of a small, family run Connecticut business.

The convenience store industry is that small neighborhood store where you pick up a coffee or a slushier, a newspaper, a snack for the morning, a gallon of milk or that pint of ice cream on the way home.

I am here to speak on behalf of all these small businesses and the customers we serve. There are hundreds of my colleagues here today.

I am hear today to ask for your support of HB 5021 – a comprehensive bill that attempts to modernize the way Connecticut goes to market for liquor, beer and wine. This bill will help all retailers that sell these products to compete with our neighboring states. The bill contains many improvements that will help us keep Connecticut shoppers shopping in Connecticut. It will benefit our customers in many ways.

HB 5021 addresses a major concern for my industry, the convenience stores of Connecticut. 40 states allow convenience

stores to sell beer. According to the National Associates of Convenience stores, beer sales represent the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest inside sales category for our retail sector. This is a huge void for the retailers in Connecticut that HB 5021 addresses. Connecticut consumers should be able to purchase this product in the same manner that they do in almost all other states.

HB 5021 is comprehensive and answers just about every question and issue this committee has heard over the past several years on liquor sales in Connecticut. Please support HB 5021 – it fixes what's wrong and does so in a way that doesn't leave any sector behind. It is good legislation and it should be passed and sent to the Governor for his signature.

Please don't miss this opportunity. The citizens of Connecticut are ready for this. They will be the big winners as competition always improves the consumer's position.