

Palmer, Steve

From: Greenfield Liquor [greenfieldliquorshop@yahoo.com]
Sent: Friday, February 24, 2012 11:50 AM
To: generallawmail
Cc: FCpackagestore Group
Subject: Opposition to new Liquor Laws



To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to voice my opposition to Governor Malloy's proposed bill to change the existing liquor laws in Connecticut. His bill 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. At least 50% of the slightly larger stores (which still offer personal service and unusual products), who support their families and usually several employees, will be gone within 2 years.

Those in favor of this bill have disguised it and promoted it as a "Sunday Sales" issue. But I believe that as Connecticut residents become more educated about Malloy's bill, they will realize that it is not just about Sunday sales and store hours. As constituents begin to lose their neighborhood stores, personal service, deliveries and a variety of beverage choices, they will resent any lawmaker that stood behind the changes which resulted in their losses.

Increasing the number of liquor permits an owner may have from 2 to 9 opens the doors to big-box retailers and major super-market chains. Does Connecticut want to be controlled by a few monopolizing retailers? In addition, eliminating the current laws making it illegal for a store owner to negotiate prices or get free goods from distributors for bulk purchases also plays into large chain stores. Big-box retailers will buy 1000's of cases at a discount and be able to sell wines, liquor and beer 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 big-boxes have a monopoly on the available permits, guess what will happen to the prices.

- 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 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 effect this bill will have on the number of CT stores will be devastating. Malloy speaks loudly about his projected increase in revenue with expanded store hours, but he never addresses the projected number who will join the unemployed. The job loss for store owners and employees is just the tip of the iceberg. With fewer accounts to service, the distributors need fewer drivers, fewer sales people and fewer support staff.

An estimated 7000 jobs will be lost as a result of this legislation.

CT package store owners have obeyed the existing liquor laws for decades. They have served their communities, paid their taxes, hired employees, and taken the responsibility for managing the sale of alcohol. 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 let's not allow the big-box stores to dictate the changes. Stand up for small business.

Tricia Swain

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