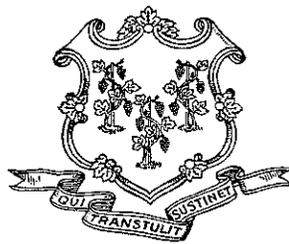


**SENATOR BETH BYE**

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**State of Connecticut**

**SENATE**

*Chair*  
Higher Education & Employment  
Advancement Committee

*Member*  
Appropriations Committee  
Education Committee  
Internship Committee  
Judiciary Committee

February 28, 2012

**Testimony to the General Law Committee**  
**Senate Bill 59: An Act Concerning Retail Wine Sellers and Wine-Related Classes**

Senator Doyle, Representative Taborsak, and Members of the General Law Committee:

My name is Beth Bye, State Senator for the 5<sup>th</sup> district, representing West Hartford, Farmington, Burlington and Bloomfield.

I am here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 59, which will allow package store permit holders to offer wine-tasting and wine education classes for a fee in their store. The current law allows for these permit holders to offer small, free tastings on-premises. This is a sensible provision which allows for a retailer to promote a new product or pass a small bit of passion and knowledge about a product on to a consumer.

Free tastings are nice promotional events. But, for some retailers, the knowledge and passion about the product they deal with every day is more academic – and the venue they seek to share this knowledge is not a promotional one, but an educational one. Greg Nemergut, one of my constituents and the owner of West Side Wine and Spirits in West Hartford, is one such retailer. This bill would allow these retailers to charge a fee to consumers, students really, to attend more comprehensive wine appreciation and wine education classes and events held on-premises.

Today is a big day for liquor laws in Connecticut, and I believe that this bill is but one more provision which will aide in the modernization of our liquor statutes, while at the same time providing retailers who so chose to take advantage of an additional available revenue stream. I urge the committee to consider passage of this proposal.

I look forward to your questions. Thank you.