

Government Affairs  
State Public Policy  
Industry Information



Partnerships  
Trade Services  
Retailer Services

**General Law Committee Testimony  
By Stan Sorkin, President  
Connecticut Food Association  
February 18, 2014**

**Testimony in Opposition to SB 82: An Act Allowing Package Store Permit Holders and Backers to Hold Gift Basket Retailer Permits.**

Chairman Doyle, Chairman Baram, and Members of the General Law Committee. My name is Stan Sorkin, President of the Connecticut Food Association. I am testifying on behalf of the members of the Connecticut Food Association in opposition to SB82.

The Connecticut Food Association is the state trade association that conducts programs in public affairs, food safety, research, education and industry relations on behalf of its 240 member companies—food retailers, wholesalers, distributors, and service providers in the state of Connecticut. CFA's members in Connecticut operate approximately 300 retail food stores and 200 pharmacies. Their combined estimated annual sales volume of \$5.7 billion represents 75% of all retail food store sales in Connecticut. CFA's retail membership is composed of multi-store chains, regional firms, and single store independent supermarkets employing over 30,000 associates. The majority of CFA members are family-owned supermarkets. Our goal is to create a growth oriented economic climate that makes Connecticut competitive with surrounding states.

Connecticut's liquor laws are very strict in defining which classes of alcoholic permit holders are permitted to sell food. Currently, package store permit holders are limited in the scope of food products they are authorized to sell. Food stores are currently only able to sell beer and are prohibited from selling wine and even such beer-type items as hard cider. We believe that creating a "gift basket retailer permit" only for package stores further creates an uneven playing field. It allows package stores to sell a vast variety of food products that the current law prohibits and now gets them into the food business, in violation of the current statute and at the detriment to Connecticut's food retailer.

We believe that Connecticut's liquor laws are antiquated. We believe that reform is required but reform can only be accomplished on a broader scale in which all stakeholders can participate to the betterment of all, not just one class of retailer. Consider extending the concept so that beer can be included as a product in a gift basket created in a food store.

Based on the current scope of the proposed bill, we urge you to vote NO on SB82.