



**State of Connecticut**  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
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**REPRESENTATIVE MARY G. FRITZ**  
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**ASSISTANT DEPUTY SPEAKER**

**MEMBER**  
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Testimony by:  
Rep. Mary Fritz – 90<sup>th</sup> District

SB 946: An Act Concerning Revenue Items  
To Implement the Governor's Budget

March 9, 2015

Chairman Berger, Chairman Fonfara, Honorable members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee,

For the record, I am State Representative Mary Fritz of the 90<sup>th</sup> District, representing parts of both Cheshire and Wallingford.

I am asking you to please not support the liquor bills before you. My understanding is that the changes are reported to bring \$25 million to the state. This is pie in the sky! Do you think people are going to stop crossing the borders to buy liquor? Why should they? The taxes on liquor in Connecticut are excessive! That's why they make the trip.

I would like to share with you conversations from very wise men of the General Assembly.

One pointed out how all the locally owned pharmacies are gone! The pharmacies are all national chains. The same is true of the local hardware stores. They have been replaced by the Lowe's and the Home Depot's. This too will happen to our liquor stores, which are mostly small businesses. Costco is on the porch waiting to come in.

My second wise man clearly and cleverly summed up the situation, "this is a solution without a problem."

I have included testimony from two of my constituents who sent me their concerns. Please consider their statements as you deliberate on this issue.

Thank you,  
Mary Fritz

March 9, 2015

Honorable State Senator John Fonfara  
Honorable State Representative Jeffrer J. Berger  
Honorable Members of the Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee  
State of Connecticut

Re: *Governor's proposed alcohol changes*

To whom it may concern:

I am opposed to the Governor's proposed alcohol changes.

My name is Vincenzo DiNatale and I was born and raised in Wallingford, Connecticut. I currently reside in Wallingford with my wife and three children (ages 7, 12 & 14). I am proud to be from Connecticut and have the opportunity to raise a family here.

I am also a business owner and very proud to be part of the small business community here in Connecticut. I have owned and operated a small business here in Connecticut for over 10 years. Connecticut has a vibrant small business community that currently exists in the alcohol industry. There are many boutique stores, small wholesalers as well as micro distilleries and microbreweries that thrive under the current regulations here in Connecticut.

Like many of my colleagues, we have made a substantial investment of time and money in our business based on the existing guidelines that govern alcohol here in Connecticut.

The proposed changes create an uneven playing field with 'big box' retailers and will be devastating to this small business community.

Consumers here in Connecticut have a choice. They can shop here in Connecticut or in the surrounding states. Our sales and excise taxes are higher than surrounding states (MA and RI have no sales tax).

The proposed changes will not benefit the consumers here in Connecticut. They are still better off leaving Connecticut to shop for alcohol.

Please support the small business community and do not support the proposed regulations.

Sincerely,



Vincenzo DiNatale  
Wallingford, CT 06492

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From: Tim Clarke tim@legislature.vermont.gov  
Subject: General Law Committee budget proposals  
Date: March 8, 2015 at 7:54 PM  
To: Vincenzo DiNatale vdi@legislature.vermont.gov

Vincenzo—would you please forward this to Mary. Thanks very much. Tim

Mary Fritz  
Assistant Deputy Speaker  
90<sup>th</sup> Assembly District- Cheshire and Wallingford

Dear Mary,

*Finance, Revenues & Bonding*

I am writing to you as tomorrow's ~~General Law~~ Committee session opens to give you some further thoughts regarding Governor Malloy's proposed budget as it pertains to the Alcohol Beverage Industry. I have spent my entire career in all three tiers of the business over the past 35 years.

We should be well aware that for the first time, the majority in ALL THREE TIERS ARE IN AGREEMENT THAT THEY DO NOT WANT THESE CHANGES. I can't remember when there has been such a unanimous voice for NO CHANGE.

1. Stores really don't want to be open past 9:00pm. We shouldn't put so many families at risk by staying open so late at night. The closure time used to be 8:00pm. Closing at 10:00pm could bring trouble to stores and small owners would now be ask to put one more hour on an already long day. Our industry services the consumer just fine by closing at 9:00.
2. The pricing works great as it is. The margins for stores are reasonable and not excessive. The target prices are consistently being achieved by Suppliers and Distributors. There isn't any "low ball" pricing being offered which could cause excess or unfair "back door" business practices. We don't have a bunch of closed store fronts which is what we would get by allowing "at cost" pricing.
3. Having the number of stores owned currently at "3 maximum locations" has also worked well. Families can compete nicely without the big box stores taking control of the State by being able to expand to "6". Any expansion in this area would cause

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hardship for both Store owners and Distributors.

Our industry is growing. The consumer is being treated fairly and is being offered a tremendous selection of products in all categories. The majority of stores are healthy and full of inventory and making a "decent" living. Nobody is getting rich but making a decent living. For once, the majority of members of all three tiers are in agreement that we are not in favor of any of these three proposed changes.

Let's be sure to encourage the Governor to leave things alone Mary. The Governor should work with his Staff to concentrate on more beneficial areas like proposing better highway systems, higher education enhancements, and more safety in our urban markets areas.

Best of luck!

Tim Clarke  
General Manager

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