

Government Affairs  
State Public Policy  
Industry Information



Partnerships  
Trade Services  
Retailer Services

**LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE TESTIMONY**  
**By Stan Sorkin, President**  
**Connecticut Food Association**  
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**TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB No. 5080: AN ACT CONCERNING LARGE  
RETAIL STORES AND EMPLOYMENT OF WORKERS DURING THE HOLIDAY  
SEASON**

The Connecticut Food Association (CFA) 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 130 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 independent supermarkets, regional firms, and large multi-store chains employing over 30,000 associates. The majority of our members are family owned privately owned supermarkets. Our goal is to create a growth oriented economic climate that makes Connecticut more competitive with surrounding states.

The Connecticut Food Association is opposed to H.B. No. 5080 for the following reasons:

- The open or close on holidays should be a stores decision based on the competitive climate in which it operates, not a state mandate. The retail business is changing. The business owner must have the ability to make appropriate business decisions affecting the well-being of his/ her livelihood. The retailer must be able to compete against on-line retailers who do big business on holidays.
- Giving the employees the option of declining work on holidays affects the ability of the store to stay open on a holiday thus causing business hardship. It reverses the typical employer-employee relationship.
- Based on their company's philosophy, some employers currently close stores on certain holidays.
- The holidays are not defined

Moreover, most of our stores are unionized and those non-union businesses give the same benefits because they compete for work force. Work rules are based on negotiated contracts between unions and management. As a result, we offer good base pay, overtime pay, as well as holiday pay. We also offer 401k and health benefits. Forcing stores to close will eliminate holiday pay for the employee and thus take money out of his or her paycheck. Food

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Partnerships

State Public Policy

Trade Services

Industry Information

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stores are not the bad apple but get lumped in with other operations that do not offer benefits to their employees.

433 South Main Street, Suite 309, West Hartford, CT 06110

email: [ctfood@ctfoodassociation.org](mailto:ctfood@ctfoodassociation.org) · [www.ctfoodassociation.org](http://www.ctfoodassociation.org) · (860) 216-4055 · Fax (860) 216-4098