

Gray, Bonnie

From: KYLE JONES <jk[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, March 02, 2018 9:46 PM
To: gltestimony
Subject: In Support of House Bill 5036

Dear Representative D'Agostino, Senator Leone, Senator Witkos, Representative Smith, and distinguished members of the General Law Committee:

My name is Kyle Jones. I am submitting written testimony in support of H.B. 5036 – An Act Promoting Craft Breweries and Distilleries and Price Fairness. As a resident of the State of Connecticut, I want to thank you for the opportunity to voice my support of House Bill 5036.

I want to start by explaining I'm not only a resident of CT but also a huge supporter of CT Beer! The past five years have really seen a massive change in the quality of beer produced by in-state beer manufacturers. Watching the industry grow at such a speed has been truly amazing, and with that growth has come growth in skilled labor, charitable giving, and community-building activities. I often choose to visit the tasting rooms of independent breweries, as this is the cheapest, freshest and most informative way for me to buy beer. I know that the money I spend in a local tasting room isn't going to a massive corporation and the beer I receive is of top quality and freshness.

My support for HB 5036 mainly stems from my support of the CT beer industry. Until recently, I was unaware that it is, in fact, a law that breweries can only sell me nine liters of beer in a day. Breweries are being restricted in ways that vineyards are not. This would not seem like an issue to most but I'm often traveling great distances on a Saturday once a month, often to MA, to purchase such high-quality beer to last my friends and myself for the month or I am forced to visit a package store. In my experience, I've found package stores to have a limited selection of CT-made beer, most of their inventory is too old to consume based on the brewer's intent on freshness, and they often way overcharge for their "secret hidden stash" for something that could be found at a brewery. As with many manufacturers, retail sales carry the highest margin and as such allow them to grow their sales and manufacturing staff to support these increased sales. When manufacturers are forced to work with middle-men like wholesalers and retailers via the three-tier system, they lose a massive percentage of their margin and subsequently their ability to grow their staff and business is cut away. In a climate where we are constantly griping about jobs leaving for overseas or being eliminated, this cottage industry is creating manufacturing jobs in CT! This leads me to my point. I find it stifling that the state maintains such a law restricting the potential sales and subsequent growth of our flourishing brewing industry. This is akin to me visiting a farmer's market where the state says I'm only allowed to buy ten eggs from the farmer, but if I visit the grocery store down the road, I'm allowed to buy the full dozen. This seems backward. In a state desperate to create jobs, it seems like stifling a manufacturing industry with proven growth is the wrong way to go. Eliminating this arbitrary limit on retail sales for breweries should result in increased job creation and increased sales tax revenue. I urge you to support HB 5036 today and be a part of creating a flourishing manufacturing industry in the state!

Thank you for your time.