

Co-Chair Leone, Witkos, D'Agostino, and Distinguished members of the General Law Committee thank you for your time. My name is John Kraszewski and I am the Captain and Founder of Armada Brewing in East Haven. I am here to testify my support for House Bill No 5036 an Act Promoting Craft Breweries, and Distilleries and Price Fairness.

The craft beer industry has been steadily growing for years now and currently the northeast region of the United States is one of the hottest spots for beer lovers. Massachusetts and Vermont have some of the largest growing brands in the region. But here in Connecticut we are not growing at the pace of these other states. Why is this you ask? It is because the current laws in place are extremely restrictive to the growth of our local breweries.

Customers from all over the Northeast are traveling hours to go to Vermont, Massachusetts and New York to visit their favorite breweries to buy cases of beer. But many customers from outside of our state are not coming to Connecticut breweries because we can only sell 9 liters to go. Many of these out of state breweries can sell up to 100 BBLs of beer in a weekend which equates to over \$36,000 dollars in alcoholic beverage tax revenue for the state and creates a bunch of local jobs. But we are not.

Why are unlimited case sales working in all the states around us but the wholesalers are telling you it would be detrimental to our industry? Why are other states thriving from the craft beer industry? You need to ask your self who is this law truly protecting?

Its not protecting the consumer. Its not protecting the breweries. Its not protecting the state budget. Its protecting the pockets of the wholesalers.

The Connecticut wholesalers association has had a chokehold on the growth of our small and independent breweries for years now and it's time to break the chain. We currently have 60 breweries within this state with more to come and there is a limited amount of space on retailer shelves and in wholesalers warehouses to fit the thousands of products that they already carry. Many of these products are from out of state. Why should our growth be limited by their space and their ability to sell beer?

Beer is like liquid bread and best sold fresh. Like a bakery consumers want their beers fresh and direct from the source. Connecticut breweries sell a product that cannot sit on a shelf and cannot sit in a warehouse for months while a wholesaler waits to sell it. How can you convince a bakery that they can only sell one loaf of bread to their customer, but the grocery store down the street can sell as much as they want?

The wholesalers cannot argue that they can get beer into peoples hands as fast as getting it direct from the source. So they need a law that prevents you from buying more than an armful to protect their bottom line. If people want to buy direct from the producer that should be the right of any consumer!

People come into our brewery, enjoy our beers and when they leave, they say "I will take the limit". Limit should not be part of their vocabulary when buying beer from a local Connecticut brewery. Thank you for your time.

John Kraszewski

Captain and Founder

Armada Brewing