

Dear Representative D'Agostino, Senator Leone, Senator Witkos, Representative Smith, and distinguished members of the General Law Committee. My name is David Lewis. 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'm writing today as I've personally watched the craft beer industry in CT grow by leaps and bounds. In only the last few years CT has gone from about ten licensed breweries to over sixty! This is an incredible feat and has in part been fostered by loosened regulations imposed by the state on these small manufacturers. I often ask small CT-based brewers how it is to work with the state. While they are often proud to be contributing members of the CT economy, the one thing that I commonly hear back is that they are restricted in ways that vineyards are not. HB 5036 seeks to eliminate the nine-liter retail volume limit imposed on these small manufacturers. 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 of all places! Eliminating this arbitrary limit on retail sales for breweries should result in increased job creation, increased sales tax revenue, increased excise tax and increased income taxes, which is by all accounts a win for the state of CT. I urge you to support HB 5036 today and be a part of creating a flourishing manufacturing industry in the state!

Thank You

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David Lewis